

# ESSAYS

*Moral and Divine,*

VIZ.

|                         |     |              |
|-------------------------|-----|--------------|
| Of Natural Reason.      | } } | Of Morality. |
| Of Divine Revelation.   |     | Of Atheism.  |
| Of Evangelic Obedience. |     |              |

## DESIGN'D

To illustrate the Necessity, Authority, and  
Amiability of REVEAL'D RELIGION:  
Together with the Dignity of the *Sacred*  
*Function*: As a seasonable Check to the  
late Growth of *Scepticism* and *Infidelity*.

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*Quisquis igitur Scripturas Divinas, vel quamlibet earum  
Partem intellexisse sibi videtur, adeo ut eo intellectu  
non ædificet istam Geminam Charitatem Dei &  
Proximi; nondum intellexit. S. Aug. de Doctr.  
Chr. l. 1. c. 36.*

*Ἡ μεγάλη Νόσος τῆς Ψυχῆς ἡ Ἀθεότης. Trismeg.*

By *THO. CURTEIS* Vicar of *Wrotham*  
in *Kent*.

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30d



TO THE  
READER.

**W**HEN I first publish'd  
these brief Essays in  
the Year 1708, I  
hope it will be readily believed, both  
from the Scope of them, and Con-  
cealment of my Name, that the  
chief Inducement thereto, was a  
just Concern at the deplorable  
Growth of Scepticism and Infi-  
delity : And that my Pains were  
at least excusable, from the daring  
Efforts made by the Author of the  
Rights, &c. and some Others,  
against the Authority of Reveal'd  
Religion, and the Dignity of the  
A 2 Sacred

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Sacred Function. *That I have now, at last, ventur'd to own them publickly, is not from any fond Opinion of their Worth, but to do myself some Justice on an Occasion almost generally known, and as generally misrepresented.*

*After many Years entirely breaking through the Prejudice of Education; impartially Examining the Points of Difference; comparing the Constitution and Doctrine of the Establish'd Church, with the purest Times of Antiquity; endeavouring to recommend its Amiability to others, together with the Duty and Reasonableness of Compliance in lesser Things, for the sake of Peace and Unity, and strengthening the common Interest of the Reformed Religion; paying the most profound*  
Defe-

To the READER. v

*Deference to all Degrees of Those, whose Province it is to Govern and Minister in Spiritual Things ; Filling up no small part of my vacant Hours with the more immediate Studies of Divinity ; and having been, for near a compleat Year, after due Examination, admitted to Deacon's Orders ; 'tis to be hoped, by every impartial Considerer it will not be thought a Crime, either in the most Reverend Patron, to have conferred, or me to have accepted, a Station which I ever highly honour'd, as the most Useful and Valuable of any in this World.*

*If I rightly know myself, this solemn Engagement, though a surprize to many others, is the Result of some Years very deliberate Thoughts, on the Weight as well*

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*as Dignity of such a Charge ; and a sincere Desire of being Serviceable to others, in the noblest Offices, as well as promoting my own Happiness, by looking with more Frequency and Delight towards that unseen State of Things to which I am hastening.*

*With such Views as these I first conquer'd all Discouragements in my own Breast ; and chose to take my Lot, by a special Assignment of Office, among those who more immediately wear the Badge of our Blessed Saviour ; though in an Age most productive of Endeavours to load His Positive Sacred Institutions with Contempt : And without such Views, Desires, and Hopes, I could neither have satisfied my self in accepting or continuing any Spiritual Trust.*

*I can be truly content, without*

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a Meîôfis, to style myself not only  
*ἐλάχιστος* but *ἐλαχιστότερος* τῶν Κλήρων;  
 and *ἐκτρώμα* \* too, or whatsoever else  
 may be thought more Diminutive:  
 Yet would willingly hope it is not  
 impossible, by diligent Care, Ap-  
 plication, and a particular Delight,  
 to do some Service in the Common  
 Vineyard, as well as those whose  
 Admission has been more generally  
 approved.

If the most strict and uninter-  
 rupted adherence to the Establish'd  
 Church for many Years; never  
 having joined in Communion with  
 any Other in my whole Life; nor  
 ever having neglected One of the  
 Three publick stated Times of Com-  
 municating, since I first engaged  
 therein; and designing my Son  
 (a Youth of very promising Hopes,  
 now at Cambridge) for the pe-

A 4

culiar

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\* 1 Cor. xv. 8.



vlii To the READER.

*culiar Service of the Church; are not convincing Proofs of my being sincerely attach'd to its Interests: I wish I knew what are.*

*As to the Aspersions of my being Fundamentally unqualified: Surely no Man of competent Sense can think me ignorant of that known Maxim, Nemo dat quod non habet; or imagine, that if I were not sure of such initiating Right (which I thank God I am; together with an Episcopal Confirmation) I should be so stupid as to live in a Neglect of it three Days. However, I can willingly bear, and heartily forgive this, with all other Suggestions; provided the common Interests of the Establish'd Church may suffer no Detriment thereby.*

*May I be allow'd to add, That above Twenty Years ago, after Pub-*

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*Publick Examination (which implies some Command of Authors in the Learned Tongues) I was Honour'd with a Diplôma from the College of Physicians; and have hitherto retain'd a considerable Practice in that Faculty among Persons of the Best Quality, as well as most of the Clergy, near me? In this I dare appeal to Envy it self: Tho' I hope none will suppose I should ever have told the World so, on any less provocation.*

*For the Essays; I confess the Brevity to which I confin'd myself, is some disadvantage: Yet, as they are, (if I may mention it without Imputation of Vanity) they seemed to be very acceptable to such of the Reverend Clergy as were of my Acquaintance: and indeed I hop'd I had not deserv'd Calumny from any true Lovers of the Church.*

*The*

x To the READER:

*The last Essay on Civil Government (occasion'd by a general Sense of Danger at that Time, from the attempted Invasion, and Her Majesty's wise Remarks thereon to Her Parliament) is now left out, in Obedience to the late Inhibition of His Majesty, relating to Matters of State and the Civil Constitution. Tho' the Scope of it was to shew the Happiness of the British Monarchy, according to those well known Distinctions made by K. Jam. I. in His Speech to His Parliament 1603; by Bp. Bilson; the most accurate Mr. Hooker; His Grace the late most Reverend Archbishop of York, in his excellent Sermon before the House of Lords, Jan. 30. 1699; and especially that ancient Oracle of our English Laws, Sir John Fortescue, Lord Chancellour*  
to

To the READER. xi  
to K. Hen. VI. in *his* admirable  
Tra& lately published from an Ori-  
ginal Manuscript in the Bodlei-  
an Library, with a large and most  
ingenious Preface and Remarks  
by that Learned Gentleman in the  
Law, the present John Fortescue,  
Esq; highly worthy of the perusal of  
every one who would put a true  
value on the best Constituted Go-  
vernment in the World.

God be praised, there is now no  
Colour of Reason for keeping up any  
longer Party Distinctions, or re-  
proachful Inve&ives against each  
other; since the united Wishes,  
Satisfaction, and Joy of both Sides,  
equally terminate in the present  
Happy Establishment; attended  
with the comfortable Prospect of a  
Numerous Issue. And since Una-  
nimity and Gratitude is all that  
seems wanting to make Us the most  
power-

xii To the READER.

*powerful and flourishing People in the Universe ; what should keep Us any longer from a serious Recollection, That We can have but One Common inseparable Interest ; which essentially depends on mutual Endeavours to make each other Easie and Happy ? In order to which ; may all Those more especially, who have the peculiar Happiness to be united in the Bosom and Communion of the same Church, always Distinguish'd for Principles of Loyalty, and a just Regard to the Prerogative of the Crown, see the Danger and Folly of cherishing Animosities ; and love as Brethren : Endeavouring to*  
“ hold the Faith, in Unity of the  
“ Spirit, in the Bond of Peace,  
“ and in Righteousness of Life.

I shall add no more ; but refer to the *Former Preface.*

T H E



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THE  
PREFACE.

**S**O *M*E Apology may be reasonably expected for the Subjects of these Ensuing Discourses; having been already, for the most Part, very copiously handled by far more Learned Pens.

To which I shall only say,

I. As the pernicious Principles of those Unhappy Men, who would impugn the Necessity and Authority of Reveal'd Religion, and darken the Positive Institutions of Christianity, through an absolute Contempt, or at least a cold Neglect, are industriously supported by continued Efforts : So the Remedies

## xiv The PREFACE.

dies against so spreading an Evil, of the most Dangerous Consequence, ought to be proportionably renewed.

II. Though enough has been said heretofore, in Respect of Strength or Clearness of Argument, to anticipate or refute all the Daring Attempts of that Nature; yet the Curiosity of the less Judicious Part of Mankind, who can never be too much on their Guard, usually prompts 'em to examine with some Readiness what appears under the Advantage of a New Dress, when they will scarce dull their Fancies by looking back on the Old.

III. Essays of this Tendency have been too often wrapt up in abstruse Metaphysical Notions, and therefore less suited to Vulgar Capacities: A Modern Fault which, perhaps, deserves to be redress'd; since

## THE PREFACE. xv

Since the same Plainness that suits the Peasant, may also serve the Philosopher; unless it be to cherish his Vanity.

IV. If an Author may be reasonably allow'd to judge in his own Case; I have, I think, taken in a greater Latitude of Thought than has been usually crowded into so small a Volume; and endeavour'd to give it the more Life by a Design'd Carelessness in Respect of Method.

V. The Differing Sentiments about those Lofty Spheres of the Church and Civil State, having rais'd our Unhappy Distinctions to such a seeming Height, as almost to forget the indissoluble Ties of a Common Relation and Interest; Some few Touches are interspers'd, with all humble Deference, towards  
the

## xvi The PREFACE.

*the resuming of such a Temper as would most effectually crush those Accidental Mischiefs, rouse Us into a becoming Gratitude, and hinder the Groundless Notions of imaginary from growing up into real Dangers.*

VI. The deplorable Growth of Practical Atheism and Fundamental Errors, is a more than sufficient Excuse for asserting, at any Time, the Superlative Worth of solid Piety and substantial Goodness ; together with the unalterable Foundations of that Holy Religion which our Renowned Ancestors esteem'd the Greatest Blessing in the World. And this should be a very Powerful Inducement to the most sincere and vigorous Uniting of all True Christians, as against a Common in-

vete

## The PREFACE. xvii

*veterate Enemy ; whose deep Stratagems are levell'd, not against this or that Opinion, but the very Essence, Authority, and Divine Original of the Christian Faith.*

Next to that Select Nation of the Ancient Jews, it may be modestly affirm'd, That there's None upon Record over which the watchful Care of Divine Providence has more eminently presid'd than these of GREAT BRITAIN. And as the Beneficence of Heaven towards this small Corner of Europe has been very singular and distinguishing in many memorable Instances of former Experience ; and in None so much as of our present Times : So they readily suggest to Us a far Nobler Improvement than to shew the Levity of our Minds in a few Big Words,

B                      *savour-*



## xviii The PREFACE.

*savouring too much of Folly and vain Ostentation; or perhaps some Respectful Wishes over a Glass, though no less Transient than Fruitless. When very Great Publick Blessings make Us truly Better; 'tis an Happy Effect, as well as a comfortable Presage for the Future: And, without any injurious Reflections, it must be allow'd, That such Persons as are duly Govern'd in their general Course by an Awful Sense of Vertue and Religion, are the Fittest Instruments to support its Reputation and truest Interest; which is here so happily complicated with that of the Civil State, as to admit of no Separation, without the highest Detriment to Both.*

*To Enquire after the daily Productions of Novelty both at Home and Abroad, and to hand them industri-*

## The PREFACE xix

dustriously about to Others, with  
 their own insignificant Remarks,  
 is so far the Province of many  
 Modern Athenians; that whenso-  
 ever the Great Wheels of Providence  
 seem not to move fast enough for  
 'em, and Things remain for a few  
 Days at the same Pitch, they soon  
 shew themselves at a Loss; and could  
 scarce find any present Relish in Life,  
 were it not for Hopes that to Mor-  
 row may afford something to gratifie  
 their eager Expectations. Vanity  
 and Change are the sweet Morsels  
 that best suit their Disorder'd Pa-  
 lates: Whilst such Kinds of Read-  
 ing as would bring 'em to the nearest  
 Intimacy with Themselves; and not  
 only discover in the truest Light  
 their own unsuspected Deformities,  
 but the sure Way to gain a much  
 Happier Temper; are rejected at  
 First Sight, as altogether insipid,  
be-

## xx The PREFACE.

because unpleasant. Nor will it be esteem'd any Disappointment, if in the rash Censures of such Capricious Criticks, the following Lines should be thought never so dull and unattractive.

But to a Mind duly possess'd with the Love of Regular Piety and Virtue ; of Duty and Gratitude to Almighty God ; of Loyalty and Obedience to Her MAJESTY ; of the Peace, Welfare and Security of the Establish'd Church ; of the Common Interests of the Reform'd Religion ; and of Justice, Goodness and Benignity to Mankind ; 'tis humbly hop'd the Design thereof may appear in some Measure suited to those Excellent Ends ; notwithstanding the numerous Imperfections every where too visible in the Performance.

## The PREFACE.

to those *Excellent Ends* ; notwithstanding the numerous *Imperfections* every where too visible in the *Performance*;

THE *Concluding Essay* [Of *GOVERNMENT*] was not in the least intended to have taken Place among the Rest, which had been some Weeks before in the Press by themselves ; and is readily acknowledged as somewhat Foreign to their general Scope : Yet This was afterwards adjudg'd not altogether improper to be added to the Former ; from a Just Concern at the late daring Effort of the Grand DISTURBER of Europe, and those extravagant Principles, by Some too unwarily cherish'd, which, tho' never so free from Design, as to particular



## The PREFACE.

*tical Persons, are directly contrary to the Foundation of our Present Establishment, and have a Natural Tendency to favour such a Tremendous Turn ; which God Almighty for ever avert.*

*And as the Principal Drift hereof, is, To preserve an Honourable Esteem of the Ancient Dignity of our most Happy and invaluable Constitution, in its Essential Parts, and their inseparable Interests ; as also of the Divine Goodness, most eminently signalized in the Glorious Instruments of its Present and Future Security: So, upon impartial Search, it will appear, That nothing is herein advanc'd but what is highly consonant to the true Genius of the British Monarchy, with the Fundamental Laws of this Realm,*  
*and*



## The PREFACE.

*and, notwithstanding Some unhappy Encroachments which have seem'd at certain Times to threaten a Total Subversion, has for many Hundred Years been deservedly acknowledg'd as inviolable.*

*If these brief Suggestions, suppos'd to be seasonable at this Juncture, shall in some Degree Answer the End sincerely propos'd in their Publication; by effectually convincing any Such as have been unhappily mistaken, in the Nature, Excellency, and Essential Limitations of Our incomparable Government; and in the most Rightful, indubitable and truly Sacred Authority, Wisdom, Justice, and inestimable Blessings both of Her MAJESTY's Reign, and the Establish'd Succession; together with a just Abhorrence*

## THE PREFACE:

*horrence of the late Impious Invasion, and the Reasonableness of such a Reconciling Temper as will best dispose all the United Britains to an Hearty Improvement of those Advantages They enjoy : 'Twill be esteem'd an abundant Compensation for any Pains of the Author, tho' they had been infinitely greater.*

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OF

OF  
NATURAL REASON.

**T**HAT all True Religion is grounded on a Firm Belief of the Being and Glorious Attributes of God; and that without this Foundation it's impossible to make any Right Advances, either in Knowledge or Practice; are Maxims which every Person, acted by a due Sense of Divine Things, will readily assent to. But how far these Fundamental Points, which seem rather suited to the Primitive Rectitude of the Human Understanding, may fall within the Reach of  
B its.

## Of Natural Reason.

its present Lapsed State, wherein all Moral Perfections are sullied and lost, and the Empire of Reason not only weaken'd to the greatest Degree, but usurp'd by the Sensitive Appetite; is the Subject of our Present Enquiry.

THE Seminal Sparks of that Pure Law of Nature, which Some Style the "Εμφύλιον, or implanted Word, tho' at the best too languid and unactive, yet if rightly improv'd, are sufficient to lead us to an humble Acknowledgment of the Supreme Being, both as the First Cause and Ultimate End. For whilst the obscure Remains of this Intellectual Capacity, or Divine Image originally instamp'd on Man, as an Essential Part of his Soul, is duly exercis'd in Contemplating the Wonders of Creation and Providence; twill (as St. Paul argues) necessarily raise the Mind to some Awful Ideas of the *aeæta* or Invisible Things; and to such an Apprehension of the *Eternal Power and God-head*, as will enforce an Obedience proportionable to that Knowledge: i.e. Twill subject the Inferior Faculties to the Sovereign Dictates

states of Reason, in a becoming Reverence of God as the Highest Good, and an Orderly Deportment towards Men, with such Justice, Temperance and Charity, as are agreeable to the Light and Conduct of that Universal Law. And so far as Men fall short in the Improvement of this Common Talent, they will be left (as he infers) ἀναπολόγητοι, *without Excuse*; not through any Necessity of Fate, but a voluntary Neglect or Abuse of those General Means and Advantages afforded by the Supreme Benefactor, for their Recovery.

NEVERTHELESS, upon the most diligent Search after, and impartial Enquiry into this Ennobling Principle of unclouded Reason, which ought to Govern and Determin the whole Man, it will appear, at the best, so far embased and obscur'd, that little or nothing of its Primitive Brightness and ancient Dignity is now remaining: But, on the contrary, instead of assisting the Soul aright in its feeble Efforts of looking up towards the true Fountain and Origin of Blessedness;



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either by assuming too much, in a Presumptuous Attempt on the Sublimest Mysteries of *Faith* (which the most penetrating Capacity of Angels can't fully comprehend) tho' sufficiently warranted by Divine Revelation; or sinking beneath its just Prerogative, by a debasing Compliance with the Organs of Sense; it does, after a sort, conspire the Destruction of its own Well-being.

IF Man in this Middle State, between the Regions of Bliss and Misery, wherein he is for a short time plac'd by way of Probation, were truly Neuter [*i. e.* if his Will, Affections, &c. were altogether unbiass'd] he might perhaps, have more Room to boast of his own Capacity and Atchievements: But when we consider those Deprav'd, tho' once highly Dignifying Faculties, instead of such desirable Neutrality, prone to make choice of that *Broad Way* which leads to the *Chambers of Death*; and, whilst unacquainted with the only Foundation of Happiness, to take up, at the best, with some irregular and delusive Enquiries after it; this

this should greatly heighten our thankful Admiration at every Step towards a compleat Recovery from those innate Springs of Vicious Habits, and deep-rooted Obliquities, by vertue of a Superior Assistance; and excite to the utmost Diligence in laying hold on the Blessed *Hope set before Us*: Which is both a necessary Duty and reasonable Condition universally enjoyn'd,

St. *PAUL*'s Assertion, more immediately directed to the Literal *Jews*, his Brethren under those Eminent Privileges of the *Mosaic Dispensation*, That *by the Works of the Law no Flesh should be justified*, is equally applicable to the *Gentile World*; in as much as he concludes them *Both under Sin*, and fallen *short of the Glory of God*: The Former, through their great Defection from those clear Precepts of the Written Law, vouchsaf'd to them by the distinguishing Favour of Heaven; and the Latter, by not living up to the pure Dictates of the Natural Conscience, in the best Improvement of their Intellectual Faculties, assisted by the Exterior Works of Creation and

Providence. Being therefore determin'd under a Moral Incapacity of Knowing and Obeving the Divine Will; an Higher Dispensation was absolutely necessary, both to afford a much clearer Discovery thereof, and impart sufficient Aids for the Performance.

IN the Fallen State of Nature, simply consider'd, a thick Cloud of insupportable Darkness and Despair wou'd have inevitably overspread the whole Human Race; and all Apprehensions of the Divine Being, as of an Inaccessible Good, reflected more Terror than Comfort; through an utter Inability to conceive the stupendious Way, and inestimable Means of Reconciliation; whereof the least Footsteps were not to be found in the whole Frame of Nature, or admirable Order of Second Causes: As is evident from the most ignorant Parts of the *Heathen* World; among whom, tho' some obscure Notions of Divine Benignity may be gather'd from the general Course of Providence, join'd with Long-suffering and Patience, yet the best Expedient they can suggest to expiate Guilt and calm the

the Conscience, is by a blind Recourse to their Idolatrous Superstitions and Ridiculous Sacrifices to such imaginary Deities, as they either dread or would invoke. But in the Glorious Discovery of Man's Redemption, are contain'd all the *Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*; which infinitely surpass the highest Flights of Reason, tho' excellently agreeable thereto, when 'tis duly illuminated by the bright Beams of Evangelic Faith: Therefore that sublime *Apostle*, who well knew the Deficiency of all Natural and Moral Attainments, concludes it such a Mystery, as could never have enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive.

Now in this State of Disorder and Alienation from God, the only Center of Blessedness, 'tis no Wonder that so Thinking a Creature as Man should, from an inseparable Desire of Happiness, recollect the scatter'd Remains of his vitiated Reason, both in forming to himself *Idea's* thereof, and of the Means to attain it; or that in so eligible an Enquiry, if unacquainted with Divine Revelation, the only unerring



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Guide, he should lose himself in a Thousand *Meanders*. 'Tis by that clear Glass alone that he can come to discern, or be duly affected with his own unsuspected Deformities, and sincerely propound the Glory of God as the Supream End of all his Actions: Otherwise it's not more natural for him to Breathe, than in his highest Speculations and Improvements, to arrogate to himself the Praise of his own overvalu'd Wisdom and Vertue.

THE most Refin'd among the Ancient *Philosophers* could acknowledge God to be the *Chief Good*; That Adoration and Praise are due to him, as the Omnipotent Creator and Highest Benefactor; yea farther, That the Happiness of Man consists in his Likeness to the Divine Image: Yet there was a palpable Tincture of Vain-glory that, like *Solomon's Dead Flies*, marr'd all their Attainments; whilst they were wholly unacquainted with the true Means of growing up to such Likeness, and obtaining those Supernatural Vertues (whereof One of the Principal is Humility) which are absolutely



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ly requisite to such a Blessed Renovation. Some plausible Shew they made of subduing the Passions to the Government of Reason, and introducing a Moral Tranquillity on the Mind: But the Radical and most Dangerous Corruptions of Human Nature in those secret Springs of Pride, Ostentation, Self-sufficiency, &c. they rather cherish'd than endeavour'd to extirpate.

NEITHER was that Fundamental Principle in the Stoic Philosophy without its Flaws, viz. *That the Happiness of Reasonable Creatures consists in Things that are within their own Power* (as in maintaining a constant Serenity and Evenness of Soul in all the Occurrences of Life); *and not in the Things of Fortune, which are out of their Disposal*; whilst it terminated only in restraining those Passions which they found disquieting to Nature, and did not reach the Source of other Latent Evils and more pleasing Vices, that suited their corrupt Inclinations.

AND tho' 'tis on good Grounds conjectur'd, That the greatest Proficients

ents among those *Gentile Sages* (sc. *Pythagoras*, *Plato*, *Socrates*, *Trismegistus*, &c.) gain'd more Knowledge in Divine Things from some Fragments of those Sacred Truths, which were made known to the People of *Israel* by Divine Revelation, than from all their Elaborate Studies of Nature; yet what wavering and inconsistent, not to say Ridiculous, Notions of a Future State, they, for the most part, entertain'd, their numerous Writings (especially the Fictions of those *Poets* who enlarg'd thereon) do abundantly discover.

NEXT to the Sublime *Plato* Himself, there's scarce any that has display'd a more laudable Greatness of Soul than *Cicero*; who was so zealous a Stickler for the *Platonic System*, that he esteem'd Other Philosophers as Vulgar and Mean-spirited, who could not come up to his Sentiments. He thought all *Heroic* Minds were influenc'd by a Divine *Afflatus*, and warm'd with a Strong Hope of Immortality. Nevertheless, when he had advanc'd many Bright Notions of the Supream Being,  
the

the Beauty and Order of Providence, the Foundations of Law and Reason, as the Guide of Human Actions, and the Common Barrier of Property, the Divine Origin and Immortal Capacity of the Soul, with the Certainty and Reasonableness of a Future State, to crown all the Vertuous Actions of this Life ; we find him in several Places of his *Tusculan Questions*, wavering, as to the last mention'd Articles ; at least, rather seeming to flag than advance in the Strength of his Hopes. He was not without frequent Hesitations ; and would not have Others depend on what seem'd probable to him, lest it might be a Fallacy ; tho' he was so fond of the Opinion himself, that " He *had rather err with* " *Plato, than be in the right with his* " *Opponents*" ; and in the Close of his Elegant Tract, *De Senectute*, resolv'd never to quit those delightful Notions, which had been his Grand Support under the Vicissitudes of Fortune, though they should be Erroneous. As for the Resurrection of the Body, he had no *Idea's* of it ; being altogether above the Reach of Philosophy : And  
there.

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\* *Lib.* 7. fore the great Naturalist, \* *Pliny*, made  
*cap.* 55. no scruple to explode it for an un-  
 accountable *Opinion*, after Christianity  
 had gain'd some considerable Footing  
 in the World.

NOR can it be thought strange ;  
 since the Immateriality and Eternal  
 Existence of the Soul, with the Distri-  
 butions of Rewards and Punishments  
 in the World to come, could at best be  
 but very obscurely suggested by the im-  
 perfect Principles of Natural Reason ;  
 and its consummate Happiness, by an  
 inseparable Re-union with the putri-  
 fied Body, instantaneously to be quick-  
 en'd, re-organiz'd and irradiated by a  
 Divine Power, was altogether above  
 the most sublime of mere Human  
 Thought ; being in the unsearchable  
 Wisdom of God reserv'd for those in-  
 comparably Brighter Discoveries of the  
 Holy Scriptures ; and especially for  
 that more Glorious Dispensation, by  
 which *Life and Immortality are*, in a  
 singular manner, *brought to Light*.

BUT That any Degree of the same  
 Infidelity and Prejudice should be still  
 handed



handed down to those Times and Places which have been eminently visited with the *Day-spring from on High*, or comforting Rays of the *Sun of Righteousness*, viz. The most *Reform'd* Parts of *Christendom*; That Men can't be willing to embrace the most advantageous Sacred Truth with a firm Assent, on the Authority of a Divine Testimony, because it appears too abstruse for their deprav'd Intellect; That they will presume to scale Heaven by the Strength and Conduct of their Philosophical Reasoning and imaginary Vertues; and spurn against that Essential Doctrine of the Cross, which was sent to shew them the clear Way thither, with those Supernatural Aids which are absolutely necessary to guide and assist them; is in the highest Degree, astonishing. And tho' the Case of such as have always liv'd in Times of Ignorance, wherein the Happy *Medium* for obtaining Spiritual *Life and Peace* has been altogether unknown (especially such as, in a Firm Belief of God's general Mercy, made the best Improvement of that Measure of Knowledge they enjoy'd) may admit of Extenuation; 'tis most certain



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certain, that These, who being acted by an impetuous Principle of Pride and Elation of Mind, in the very Meridian of the Blessed Gospel, resign themselves to the Conduct of that Worldly Wisdom which is opposite thereunto, and endeavour to lessen the Dignity and Efficacy of that Divine Sacrifice, by which alone their Defilements can be expiated, and their Supreme Happiness secur'd; must inevitably fall under the severest Condemnation.

FOR, whatsoever Some may fancy in their exorbitant Panegyrics on the Strength, Clearness and Sufficiency of Human Reason, to comprehend the most sublime Parts of Religion; not Discerning the Depth of Infernal Policy couch'd under those specious Suggestions; the wretched Degeneracy and real Imbecility thereof are so deplorably manifest, that, instead of being subservient to the Blessed Ends of the Evangelic Ministration, this usually proves the most insuperable Obstacle thereunto [As shall be shewed hereafter, when we come to enquire  
more

more particularly into the Causes of *Arbeism*]: Nor does it always stop there, but too often offering Violence to its own Native Propensions, gives the full Sway to the Sensitive Appetite, and sinks down into the grossest Acts of Moral Impiety: So great is the Danger of misimproving, or lessening those admirable Irradiations of Divine Love in the Mysteries OEconomy of Man's Redemption (wherein the Glory, Wisdom and Veracity of God are immediately concern'd) because the feeble Light of Reason cannot satisfactorily comprehend them.

IF the Harmonious Concurrence of the Divine Attributes in that Blessed Work (which the Holy Writings always represent as a most Glorious and ineffable Mystery) could have been sufficiently discover'd by the Light of Nature, in its highest Improvements, what need would there have been of that compassionate Condescension of Almighty God in Revealing it, tho' obscurely, to some through all Ages, in Ways altogether Supernatural; as by Immediate Inspiration, by Visions, by  
ar

an Audible Voice, &c? He might have spar'd the sending so many Inspir'd Prophets; and our Blessed Saviour, his Select Apostles, to make known this important Mystery to the World. *Athens*, the most Famous Seminary of Learning and Speculative Science, was altogether unacquainted with it when *St. Paul* came thither; and how hardly it went down with them afterwards, the Sacred History informs us: No Place, so Populous, made such an Unprofitable Use of that Divine Embassy. Their Learned Ignorance, with the rest of the *Virtuosi* of that Age, was baffled by the *Foolishness of Preaching*; wherein 'twas plainly prov'd, That the Way to Man's true Happiness, which the Greatest Masters in Philosophy had so anxiously sought after, was only to be found in a *Crucified Christ*.

AND if the Strength of Human Reason, assisted by the highest Advantages, had been sufficient, without a special Divine Gift, to embrace that Saving Doctrine, tho' from the Mouth of its Blessed Author, and confirm'd

firm'd by the most unquestionable Miracles that ever were vouchsaf'd to the World; it's scarce probable That those Learned *Expositors* of the *Law* and *Prophets*, would have been such a Dreadful Instance of the most obstinate Incredulity and Rejection: Or that *Celsus*, *Porphyrus*, *Julian*, &c. (Men of as Polite Learning, Refin'd Reason, and great Deference for *Moral Virtue*, as any of our Brightest Modern *Witts* can pretend to) would have loaded it with such severe Aspersions and bitter Invectives; after it had been planted sometime in the World, and its Principles more thoroughly examin'd. The former could well enough have relish'd a *Messiah* set off with Honourable Titles, and visible Marks of Regal Power, or, in their own Sence, One that should *live for ever*: But that, Poverty, Disgrace, Suffering and Mortality should make up any part of his Character, they cou'd not endure; therefore resolv'd to elude, or at least pervert the Scope of the Holy *Prophets* concerning Him. And the Latter, with no less Fatal Derision, oppos'd both the Doctrine and Divine

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## Of Natural Reason.

Authority of its Author ; esteeming those ignoble Circumstances inconsistent with the pretended Dignity of his Person, and the Glorious Design of his Office ; and that 'twas highly absurd to expect Life from Him who was subjected to Death, and Blessedness from One that was made both a Curse and Reproach in the open View of the World.

NEITHER was *Hierocles*, that Grave Commentator on *Pythagoras*, and almost Idöizer of *Moral Philosophy*, less prejudic'd against the Sacred Mysteries of the *Christian Faith*. He profess'd that He could yield to Nothing but *Reason* ; and extoll'd Philosophy above the Skies ; “ as \* sufficient  
 “ to Refine and Perfect Humane Life ;  
 “ to restore the Divine Image, and raise  
 “ Man to Immortality and a Re-pos-  
 “ session of his Proper State of Bles-  
 “ sedness.

\* In Carm.  
 Pyth. Praef.

JAMBLICUS indeed, whose Writings contain many Excellent Notions of a Deity and Providence, with the Reasonableness of Praise and Adoration,

ration, is more modest in Descanting on Human Abilities. He has this Memorable Passage ; † “ *Tis not easie to know what God will be pleas'd with, unless we are either immediately instructed by Him our selves, or taught by Some Person whom He has convers'd with, or arrive to it by some Divine Means or other* : Which plainly shews that He thought the Conduct of Human Reason very Defective. But though He had an Opportunity of Recourse to the true Means, being long after the Propagation and Wonderful Progress of the Gospel (for He liv'd as low as *Constantine the Great*) we do not find He ever was so happy as to embrace it.

† In vit. Pythag.

OTHER Parallel Testimonies of the Darknes and Deficiency of Human Reason in these profound Enquiries, with the Necessity of a more perfect and unerring Guide, for the Brighter Discovery and Clearer Explication of the Divine Will, had been left before by *Plato*, interspers'd in many Places of his Excellent Works ; which the Learned *Mr. Clark*, in his

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incomparable Discourses on the *Unchangeableness of Natural Religion*, has with great Industry collected. In his *Politics*. He mentions an *ἰγρὸς Μνῦνς*, or *Fit Messenger*, to Reveal what was now Dark and Abstruse. And *Æneus Gazeus*, speaking of Him, in a Dialogue introduces *Theophrastus* assenting to *Axithenus*——“I acknowledge what you have excellently said :  
 “ For Plato himself determin’d that his  
 “ Opinions should be adher’d to, ’till  
 “ a Diviner Person should appear on  
 “ Earth, who should make known the  
 “ very Truth ; and to Him it was re-  
 “ quisite that all should assent and Obey, If  
 Plato any where expresses himself so fully (as indeed None can deny but He has some Hints that look like it, especially in his *Alcibiad.* and *Phædon.*) ’tis rather probable, from the exact Agreement with that Prophecie of *Moses* concerning the *Messiah*, Deut. 18. 15. that he had it from the *Jewish VVritings*, than any Extraordinary Impulse of his own : And ’tis also too probable, That if He had liv’d to see it verifi’d in the Gospel-Dispensation, He would no less have stagger’d at it than the  
 Jews

*Jews* themselves; since 'tis undeniably evident from their Example, That a Supernatural Assistance was no less necessary for the Reception than Discovery thereof,

*MAXIMUS TYRIUS* an Eminent *Platonist* (who was Tutor to that Vertuous, but Unchristian and too much Prejudic'd Emperor *M. Aurel. Antoninus*) tho' very full and Orthodox in his Acknowledgments of the \* Degene-<sup>\* Dissert.</sup> racy and Corruption of the Human<sup>22.</sup> Will, and its Proneness to Vicious Pleasures through its own innate Infirmary; was unhappily defective in not applying Himself to the onely Cure. His Reason, it seems, could not stoop so low; but rather chose to take up with what was merely Superficial, and at the Best but Palliative.

To These might be added *Seneca*, *Plutarch*, *Epictetus*, *Arrianus*, *Boetius* and the rest of those Deep-thinking Men; whose Brighter Capacities and more inquisitive Dispositions seem'd to set them above a Common Level, both for Examining and Embracing the



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*Christian Faith*: And had it but been usher'd in with a Splendid Dress, and indulg'd the hidden Treasures of Pride and Vanity in Man's Heart; the Success had, doubtless, answer'd. But the Fundamental Doctrine of the *Cross*, with all its Depending Branches, was so unsuited to the Narrow Province of Carnal Wisdom, that the *Jews* stumbled at it, and the *Greeks* (*i. e.* the most Learn'd among the *Gentiles*) derided it as unaccountable Blindness and Folly.

THAT Lively Metaphor of a *Second Birth*, wherein the Blessed Effects of Christianity on the Minds of Men (as well as the *Baptismal* Initiation) are excellently compriz'd, has been but little more agreeable to the Zealous *Patrons* of Reason in all Ages, than once it was to that Fam'd *Master in Israel*; nor \* *S. Peter's* Illustration thereof, founded much better than an unintelligible *Fargon*. And indeed whilst they are resolutely given up to those Erroneous Dictates, and can look no farther than the Outside of Things, the Despicable Appearance and ignominious

\* 1 Pet.  
1. 23.

minious Death of *Christ*, with those inseparable Doctrines of Humility and Self-Denial, appear no better than Weakness and Absurdity, or at least inconsistent with the Honour and Wisdom of God: Whereas, if they did but consider them aright in their Sublime Principles and Glorious Design, that Darkening Veil of Prejudice would soon vanish; and they would appear not only Amiable, but most worthy of the Divine Wisdom, Omnipotence, Justice, Goodness and Veracity.

WHAT shall we say then to the pernicious, but too growing *Sect* of our Modern *Deists*, or rather *Atheists* in Masquerade (tho' shelt'ring themselves under the general Name of *Christians*); who, being puff'd up with an imaginary Infallibility in the Conduct of Natural Reason, or (as *S. Paul* phrases it) *spoil'd through Philosophy and vain Deceit*, audaciously strike at the very Foundations of *Reveal'd Religion*; and endeavour to subvert those ancient Pillars laid by the Omnipotent *Architect*, whose *Wisdom, Counsels and Ways*, as well as *Essence*, are *unsearchable*;

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Whilst under the specious Disguise of more Refin'd Reasoning, they would perswade us, after all that admirable and harmonious Discovery of the Divine Will in the Sacred Writings, and clearest Explication of 'em in the Incarnation, Doctrine, Life, Death, Resurrection, and Intercession of our Blessed *Savior*, to quit those purest Springs of Saving Knowledge, or lessen the Dignity and Prerogative of their Glorious *Author*, and go back for safer, at least clearer, Instructions to the Schools of *Pythagoras*, *Plato*, *Aristotle*, &c. or rather (if Practice be a true *Index* of the Mind) to *Epicurus*, *Lucretius*, or the Modern *Spinoza*, *Hobbs*, *Monsieur Dendermonde*, &c.

'Tis greatly to be wish'd, That *Moral Virtues*, which are most effectually enforc'd by the Precepts of Christianity, had more sincere Admirers, and were more generally courted and practis'd in the World: Especially, That so great a Part of those who value themselves upon an higher Account, did not by a kind of Dispensing Power connive at too great a Remiss-  
ness

ness in these Essential Points ; and thereby expose themselves, as well as Religion in general, to the merciless Aggravations of such as greedily watch for all Opportunities to defame it. Nevertheless, if we fairly trace this sort of Champions for Moral Vertue, we shall find None in Reality so great Strangers thereto ; none more dissolute or entirely given up to the Dull Enjoyments of Sense : And indeed, if their pretended Principles were no better varnish'd over than their Practice, it's more than probable they would not gain so many Profelytes. Under all their Fine Flourishes and insinuating *Encomium's* on Natural Religion (most truly Honour'd by those who have the greatest Deference for Reveal'd) 'tis too apparent, That they would insensibly dwindle it into none at all ; instead of endeavouring to imitate or Refine upon the most Civiliz'd *Heathens*, whom they would be thought to hold in so great Veneration. 'Tis none of the least Instances of Degeneracy in Human Nature, that we find it so greedily Receptive of any Specious Novelties, tho' a Fatal Poyson attends 'em ;  
which,



which, being once inbib'd, too easily takes us off from suspecting their dangerous Tendency, and in a short Time cajole us into the Loss of that very Reason we so much pretend to. But, supposing the Best that can be imagin'd, *i. e.* That the Aims and Actions of this Sort of Men were never so sincere and unmask'd; since they boldly strike at the only Foundation and Blessed *Medium* of Pardon, Peace, Acceptance and Reconciliation with God, by Effacing that Fundamental Article of his Divine Essence, on which the Vertue, Fulness and Sufficiency of his Expiatory Sacrifice, and the Glory and Efficacy of his Intercession so immediately depend; subverting the Principal Scope, unerring Conduct and indisputable Authority of the Holy Scriptures; and Exalting a Natural Light in Opposition thereunto; They ought to be shun'd as the most Dangerous and avow'd Enemies to his Crown and Dignity; with no less Resolution than we would, the Infectious Steams of a Pestilential Air.

WHEN

WHEN any *Rival*, by secret Craft or more open Practice, does but seem to push at our Freehold Estates or other Temporal Rights, we are soon rous'd from a *Gallio-like* Indifference, and forward enough to Dispute the Title: But in these Greater Things, which have been formerly thought much more valuable than all other Enjoyments, How many can too patiently hear the highest Indignities offer'd to their Holy Religion and its Blessed Author, the Boldest Profanations and Sacrilegious Reflections, with a seeming Unconcernedness in Respect of the Common Interest of Christianity; tho' 'tis to be hop'd, not without a private Detestation! And whether the unprecedented Growth of *Atheism*, Immorality and Fundamental Errors, in the Years lately pass'd, be not in a great measure owing to such profound Carelessness and unwarrantable Silence in the Better Sort, when those unhappy Occasions call'd for their Best Endeavours to Stem so Poysonous a Current; may perhaps deserve a Serious Consideration.

N E I 5

NEITHER is the affected Raillery of that Despicable Sett of Men (if they may claim a Place among Rational Creatures) whose overflowing Excrements of Wit, and high-strain'd Sophistry are employ'd by Infernal Commission in Burlesquing the Divine Oracles, and turning the most Sacred Things into Ridicule, any less Dangerous, than the Connivance at, or Encouragement of it, is deservedly Infamous to all Persons Professing Christianity, and a due Veneration for those inestimable Writings. That the least Attempts of this Nature, which (like the unaccountable Habit of Profane Swearing) are so manifest an Infringement on the Laws of common Decency and Humanity, can be thought tolerable, much less Entertaining or Suited to the Ends of Conversation; is both highly astonishing, and an undeniable Proof of our being sunk beneath all true Relish of Vertue or Substantial Goodness. If the *Slothful Servant* shall be adjudg'd to utter *Darkness* for a bare Negative Fault, in not improving *the Talent* committed to his Charge :

Charge: And if such as *Obey not the Gospel* of our Blessed Lord, *shall be punish'd with Everlasting Destruction from his Vindictive Presence and the Glory of his Power*: What augmented Treasures of insupportable Wrath may we not suppose (nay, are we not assur'd from Divine Testimony) to be in Reserve for those who so audaciously, tho' perhaps often unwarily, disparage the most happy Illustration of Infinite Wisdom and Grace!

WHAT can be more stupendiously Horrible than That those Sacred Springs of Spiritual Knowledg and Consolation (the greatest Blessing, next to the Wonderful Incarnation of our *Savior*, that was ever confer'd on the VWorld) whose Divine Authority is as visible as the Light to all that are not wilfully harden'd, should be thought a fit Subject for the Airy Brain of every Conceited Critic to evaporate his Folly! Had these Bold Champions for *Atheism* but the same Apprehensions whilst the feeble Union of an Immaterial Being with its gross Enclosure of Animated Clay, appears most Firm



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Firm and Vigorous ; as they usually have near the Time of their inevitable Separation, when the One is ready to return to its First Matter, and the Other hastening apace to its Eternal Abode ; their affected Bravery would be not a little shock'd with the most passionate Accents of Horror and Regret. But the Case is far otherwise : Things in present View most sensibly affect them, being best suited to a Deprav'd Appetite, and after the clearest Arguments imaginable, the Organs of Sense by a common Votewill pass for the truest Test of Pleasure : The thin Breath of Applause, tho' from the very worst of Judges, shall still lift 'em up, if possible, to a more Dangerous Pitch ; or, at Best, what they are pleas'd to call Reason, shall, like an impetuous Torrent, bear down all that opposes it : Whereas, let but the same Persons once *come to themselves*, like the Returning Prodigal, when tir'd with the Swinish Diet (Before which they can't reasonably be esteem'd Competent Judges) and the Reputation of Serious Piety, with all its Concomitants, shall stand or fall according to their own Arbitrement.

To

To wound *Religion* the more effectually in those Chief Props which should support it; Nothing is more common with them than to vent their Fine Witty Turns and keenest Reflections on the CLERGY; As if, *To Minister in Sacred Things* were beneath the Dignity of Human Nature; and that Excellent Commission, which, in a Pious Discharge, intitles to *Double Honour*, had not the least Impress of Divine Authority, either in its Origin or Execution. And it were to be wish'd, That too many who have Goodness, or at least Civility, enough to scruple doing it immediately themselves, did not share in the Crime by Discovering too pleasant a Relish of what rather deserv'd Reprehension. If the Smallest Good Office, or most inconsiderable Act of Kindness, such as *Giving a Cup of Cold Water*, will be so eminently taken Notice of and Rewarded by the Great *Master* of the Celestial Family: If He esteems all Benefits and Injuries to the Meanest of his Domesticks, as if done more directly to Himself: And if, not to serve the  
Common

Common Interest of Religion in our Respective Stations and Capacities, shall be adjudg'd no better than a Disservice to it: What can be easily thought too hard of such as stick not to vilifie Those who by a voluntary Choice and peculiar Assignment of Office, wear the Badg of his more immediate Service in the World; and thereby, together with the Infectious Example of their own dissolute Lives, contribute not a little towards Frustrating the Happy Ends of Christianity? What is this but *to fill up the Remainder of Christ's Sufferings*, in These, the most Useful of his Members, who bear about them the  $\Sigma\pi\sigma\mu\epsilon\lambda\alpha$  of their Blessed Master? Which, tho' it reflects the highest Dignity on them (as *S. Paul* joyfully esteem'd it) will, at last, without Timely Repentance, fall insupportably heavy on the Heads of Those who have been the Active Instruments thereof. Nor will the common Plea of particular Vices and Failings, tho' back'd with too much of Reality, serve in any great Measure to palliate the Injury, since the Function is Sacred, and therefore truly Honourable,

able, whatever the Persons may be, and a compleat Exemption from the ordinary Infirmities of Human Nature, is neither Essential thereunto, nor Reasonable to be expected: Tho' Exorbitant Passions, Unfavoury Speech and Irregular, but especially Immoral, Actions, are very ill becoming Such as have the Honour to be Styl'd *The Salt of the Earth*, and to Season Others with their Heavenly Doctrin and Example.

THE most Dangerous Inroads to Atheism and Irreligion, have been in all Ages made by the greatest Pretenders to Reason; and never in any, more than the Present. 'Twas an unusual but Politic Charge given of Old, to *Fight neither with Small nor Great, but only the King of Israel*: So these Bold Opponents, having studied the Shortest Way, regard not any Particular Denominations of Churches; but like Men Acted by a Desperate Resolution, strike more home, even at the Root of all Reveal'd Religion, as the surest Way to cut off those too Numerous Branches at once. The Grand

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Deceiver



## Of Natural Reason.

Deceiver of Mankind, *as an Angel of Light*, has always too successfully carry'd on his countermining Ends under the Mantle of External Profession; and so far prevail'd on the unwarrantable Curiosity of some, as to exchange the more Substantial Part, for Airy Notions and mere Speculative Opinions: But his most audacious Attempts, in Striking openly both at the very Essence and Name of Christianity, He has in a special manner reserv'd for the Supine Carelessness and palpable Degeneracy of the Last Times. 'Tis no Wonder therefore that He sets up the Fair Standard of Reason, and ranges all his Forces under that plausible Covert, to overthrow the Authority of the Holy Scriptures; to Ridicule and bear down the Ministerial Function; and load all the Positive Institutions of the Christian Religion with Indignity and Contempt. A very Daring Effort of this pernicious Tendency, we lately had in that infamous Product of a Designing Author, falsely intituled *The Rights of the Christian Church*; tho' happily Refuted, and Branded with just Marks of Ignominy,

miny, by the Excellent Pens of Two very Learned *Divines*. And how highly it concerns all Pious Christians, of what Persuasion soever, especially Those of the *Reformed* Interest, to forget their Lesser Points of Difference, and heartily contribute the best United Endeavours against their Common Enemies, of this most Dangerous Sort; shall be hereafter hinted in the Close.

BUT 'tis now high Time to shut up this Miscellaneous Discourse on the Manifest Corruption and Impotency of *Natural Reason*; its Strong Byas to Sensitive Pleasures, and utter Aversion to what is most truly Good, or suited to the pure Original Gust of a Spiritual Being. From the whole, and many other Hints that might have been given, 'tis but too evident, That this Noble Discriminating Power, by which Man esteems himself to be rais'd so much above the Numerous *Classis* of Sensitive Creatures, how lively and penetrating soever it was in the Primitive Purity of Nature, whilst the Inferior Fa-

culties observ'd a Regular Subordination to 'its Sovereign Dictates, is now in a great measure sunk into Brutality ; enslav'd to the Tyranical Impulse of Sensual Pleasures, and yet in Love with the unhappy Servitude ; or, at Best, wrapt up in a thick Cloud of Ignorance and Prejudice ; weaken'd in its Discerning and Executive Powers ; and always wavering both in the Choice and Pursuit of its imaginary Satisfaction : And that 'tis altogether insufficient, without a Supernatural or Divine Assistance, not only to attain a clear Knowledge and Apprehension of, but, when Discover'd, to embrace with a Firm and Practical Assent, the only true Means conducing to our Ultimate Felicity. In a Word ; when it puts on the most Beautiful Visage, and makes the greatest Conquest on the Sensitive Appetite, 'tis no better than a Fine Flourish, without any just Proportion of intrinsic Worth to Recommend it ; always cherishing the most Dangerous Inmates, *viz.* Pride, Vanity, and Censoriousness, with an over-valuing Opinion of its own Acquisitions : Therefore  
infi-

infinitely short of, or rather Diame-  
trically opposite to, that Habitual  
Goodness, Sound Knowledg, true Self-  
denial, Meekness and Charity, which  
eminently belong to the *Evangelic*  
Dispensation; and are the proper  
Lineaments of the Divine Image, the  
very Life and Soul of Religion, and  
the most Perfect *Compendium* of  
what is truly Valuable, either re-  
specting God, our Selves, or Fellow-  
Christians. But this will fall under  
the Two next Enquiries.

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The first of these is the fact that the  
 Government has been unable to secure  
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O F  
DIVINE REVELATION.

**M**AN, having lost the Primitive Rectitude of his *Reason* and all the Subservient Faculties, through an Universal Hereditary Corruption transmitt'd from the First Representative down to his whole Posterity, was concluded under a *Moral Impotence* or absolute Incapacity for that Divine Knowledg and Communion whereunto He was Design'd. When He had made the Fatal Exchange of that Rich Treasury of *Moral Principles* which maintain'd a Perfect Harmony between Flesh and Spirit, and engaged Both in the Superlative Love and Delightful Service of the Supreme  
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Being ; for an erroneous Judgment, perverse Disposition of Will, a strong Propension to gratify the Vitiated Senses in all their boundless Excursions and Untraceable Irregularities, and an utter Averſation to the Knowledge and Obedience of the Divine Will ; It was altogether impoſſible for Him, without a New Principle of Life, ſtrong enough to change the very Bent and Complexion of his Soul, cleanſe it from the Filthineſs of Carnal Affections, and qualify it for thoſe Delights which are Sublime and Spiritual ; to Diſcern the attractive Beauty of Holineſs, be duly affected with his own inexpressible Deformity, or make Choice of and Practically embrace the only Way to his Ultimate Happineſs.

**T**H E Corrupt Remains of thoſe Intellectual Faculties, which at Firſt contributed to the Higheſt Pitch of Loving God, *i. e. with the whole Heart, Soul, and Strength*, would now, without a Superior Conduct, rather widen the Diſtance and heighten the Alienation. For, ſince they could only

ly serve to aggravate the just Reflections of Guilt and Shame, suggest the Impossibility of appeasing Divine Wrath, and exclude all Reasonable Expectation of Mercy, they would not afford the least Ground of Encouragement to Repentance, or Endeavouring a Reformation. The Natural Consequence whereof, is, To take a Deep Carouse in the imaginary Sweets of Sin, and alleviate, as much as possible, the Fears of an After-reckoning by a resolute Diversion to the most Gratifying Enjoyments of Sense. But 'tis not Difficult to guess what a miserable Expedient this must needs prove in the End, and how poorly Satisfactory for the Present; though too too many are so besotted as to make the unhappy Tryal. When the scorching Anticipations of Future Vengeance do most sensibly affect 'em, they boldly plunge into all the Excesses of Sensuality; or, in their Brightest Intervals, only Breath out (like that Perverse Prophet of Old) some faint and abortive Wishes of sharing at last *with the Righteous* in their happy Exit and Reward, to stifle the uneasy Twinges of present Convictions.

BUT



BUT, to the Eternal Exaltation of the Divine *Attributes*, which the most elevated Faculties of our Souls can at present no more duly admire than perfectly comprehend, *Man* was not left in this Lapsed State destitute of Help and Hope: But an adequate Remedy was provided, not only for the compleat but advantageous Reparation of this inconceivable Loss; tho' involv'd with Difficulties that would have appear'd insuperable to any but Infinite Wisdom. Some early Glimmerings of Divine Light were happily display'd in that profound and impenetrable Darkness; and a Comfortable Promise of the Blessed Redeemer, to anticipate Despair, was graciously interwoven with that irreverfible Curse denounced on the Seducer: The Glorious Accomplishment whereof, in the *Fulness of Time*, and in its utmost Extent, is the very Summ of all *Reveal'd Religion*, the Joy of the Holy Angels, and the Blessed Origin of Life, Peace and Everlasting Consolation to Mankind: Which justly claims the highest Accents of Praise and Adoration

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on from all the United Powers of the Soul, both in this World and that to come.

As a Great Master Builder, having Design'd some Magnificent Structure of the most exquisite Perfection, forms to Himself an exact Model of the whole Work in the *Idea* of his Mind, before it is begun : So, if it may be lawful, with the Deepest Humility, to illustrate, by such Faint Comparisons, that which infinitely surpasses the Reach of our present Capacity, the Omnipotent Creator and Unchangeable Fountain of Blessedness, to whom the whole intricate Chain of Futurities was ever present in One Comprehensive View ; was pleas'd both to Form the Glorious Design of Creation and Providence, and influence or direct all their untraceable Parts, whether respecting the Mutability of Man's First Estate, with his Total Defection, and the Source thereof in those Apostate *Spirits*, or his Stupendious Recovery, with all the Blessed Means directly or more remotely subservient thereto ; so as to terminate,

nate, with a perfect Harmony, in magnifying the immense Riches of his Grace and Glory by *Jesus Christ*. And tho' Man, by his Disobedience to the Supreme *Legislator*, had at once Forfeited his Original Title to the Inheritance both of Heaven and Earth ; yet the whole Patrimony being thus happily reinvested in the Person of the Eternal *Messiah*, is again Dispensed from Him (the most Absolute *Heir of all Things*) as Sole *Head* and Great *Trustee* of the Church. Hence 'tis very Emphatically call'd in Holy Scripture *the Purchased Possession* : And as no Effectual Claim can be made there-to, but by Vertue of our Adoption in and through Him ; so, by that Gl rious Pledg of the most ineffable Wisdom and Love, we have not only the surest Title both in Law and Equity, but the greatest Encouragement imaginable to plead it, by our Blessed *Advocate*, in the Supreme Court of Heaven.

T H A T a Reasonable Creature, endued with a Sufficiency of Power for Perseverance, undone by Voluntary Deviation, and become no less Sinful  
than

than Miserable, should be rescu'd from the Jaws of Death and a Triumphant Enemy, and Restor'd to the highest Favour and Fruition of an Offended God; in so admirable a Method, every Way consistent with, and highly illustrating the inseparable Perfections of the Divine Being: That a compleat Propitiatory Sacrifice of infinite Value was prepar'd to expiate the Guilt, transfer the condign Punishment, and purchase Pardon for the Offender: That a Glorious *Mediator*, of Divine Perfection, no less able than willing to Save, should voluntarily interpose, to make up that vast and inconceivable Breach; and Himself become both the Root and Pattern of Holy Obedience to all that Effectually receive Him: That Two Distinct Natures, without the least Confusion of Properties, shou'd constitute One Glorious Person, Design'd for that Mighty Work; which were absolutely Necessary, both to screen them from avenging Wrath, and to Dissipate their Fears, by Drawing down the Bright Beams of Divine Love, and rendring them Susceptive thereof: That *Mercy and Truth* should  
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## Of Divine Revelation.

so happily *meet together*, and *Righteousness and Peace kiss each other* : In a Word, That there should be such a Wonderful Complication of Omnipotent Wisdom, Goodness and Love, shining through the Whole Harmonious Scheme of Man's Happy Redemption ; in Delivering Guilty, forlorn Wretches from the Original Sentence of Condemnation, wooing, perswading and entreating them to consent to their own Happiness, by a Thankful Submission to the Easy Terms thereof ; the Summ of which are *Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ* ; the Former including an actual Forsaking of Sin, and the Latter, a steady Engagement in Practical Obedience : All these astonishing Wonders, tho' of the greatest Certainty imaginable, are such a Bottomless Deep, That they far exceed the shallow Limits, and most penetrating Searches of Human Reason, assisted by the highest Aids in this State of Mortality : Those Blessed Spirits above, which continually encompass the Celestial Throne, *desire to look farther into them* : And we must be content, with

with that Great Apostle, to know That they infinitely *surpass* all present *Knowledge* and Comprehension.

NEITHER could the Glorious Enterprize of such an Almighty *Agent* have produc'd any Meaner Effects, since we are assur'd, from the most infallible Authority, That *God was in Christ, Reconciling the World unto Himself*; That He was no less than *The Mighty God* who had undertaken to be *the Prince of Peace*; That He has an absolute Sovereignty of all Created Beings, in as much as they *were made by Him and for Him*; and that through his Powerful Mediation the very Pillars of the Earth are born up, and Divine Patience, in a continu'd *Series* of innumerable Benefits, has been exercis'd towards a Sinful World. He was therefore able to free us perfectly from all those pressing Evils which we could never have sustain'd, *viz.* Our Sins, with their inseparable Concomitants, Fears and Sorrows; to convey all those Spiritual Blessings which are requisite for our present Direction and Encouragement, and at last bring

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us safe to the Heavenly Inheritance. The sweet Agreement of Power and Compassion which so happily meet together in Him, as the proper Result of that Blessed Alliance between the Deity and Human Nature, readily suggests to Frail Mortals an abundant Consolation and Support; since by the One He is always touch'd with the liveliest Sense of those manifold Infirmities incident to their present Condition, and by the Other abundantly Qualified for a continual Communication of seasonable Aids; to pardon their innumerable Deviations, supply their manifold Defects, and impart both an acceptable Savour and enhancing Value to their sincere tho' imperfect Obedience.

No Wonder then That *Satan* as *Anti-Christ*, by his subtil Instruments, the strenuous Advocates of *Reason*, has appear'd more than ordinarily industrious to Efface that Fundamental Article of Christianity, the *Hypostatical* Union of the Divine and Human Natures in the Person of our Blessed *Savior*; it being no less than the very

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*Corner-Stone* which upholds the whole Glorious *Frame of that Heavenly Building*. For, as He was the *Eternal Son*, Co-existent with the *Father*, and infinitely Happy before all Created Beings; He was also the *First-Born* manifested in Time, to Restore and Reconcile the Lapsed World, pursuant to that Glorious Design wherein he had before voluntarily engag'd: And so the whole United Honour both of *Creation* and *Redemption* terminates in Him. At the Accomplishment of the Former, in its Native Beauty and Perfection, Holy *Job* tells us *The Morning Stars sang together, and all those Sons of God shouted for Joy*: And when He Descended to enter on that Mighty Work of Raising and Perfecting a New Creation; to take Mankind into a Natural Union, by Assuming that *Prepared Body* of Human Flesh; into a Legal Union, by becoming their Surety; and into a Mystical, by Adopting them as Members of his Glorious Body, through the Sanctifying Efficacy of the Holy Spirit; the same Heavenly Choir came down with Rapturous Acclamations of Praise, Benignity

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mignty and Peace, to congratulate them on that Happy Occasion : Both which were but a small Resemblance of the *Universal Honour, Dominion and Blessing* which shall incessantly redound to Him at his next Triumphant Appearance. But that which will infinitely heighten both the Admiration and Praise, will be the just Reflexions on that Depth of Divine Wisdom which could Direct such improbable and seemingly contrary Means to produce so Glorious Effects : That the Way should be no less Miraculous than the Work it self : And that the Son of God, by the whole Course of his ineffable Humiliation, more particularly submitting to an ignominious Death, and visiting those Dark Recesses of the Grave, tho' a Stranger to *Corruption*, should Raise up the Dead World to a Capacity of Eternal Life and Blessedness ; Disarm and lead Captive the *King of Terrors* ; and enable us, against all the Reluctancy of Frail Nature, to look through those Disconsolate Shades with Joy and Triumph.

THE Sublimest Myſteries of the Chriſtian Religion, viz. The Glorious and Incomprehenſible *Trinity*, or Diſtinct Relations, in Eternal Unity of Divine Eſſence; with their Sacred Order, inſeparable Properties, and Harmonious Operations; in the Bleſſed Contrivance, Happy Accompliſhment, and Effectual Application of all the Tranſcendent Benefits of Redeeming Love; are ſo clearly expreſs'd and Emphatically enforc'd in the Writings of the Holy *Apoſtles* (whoſe ſucceſſful Labours and Inſpir'd Inſtructions were eminently confirm'd by Miracles, as the moſt convincing Proof of their Divine Authority) and ſo firmly interwoven with all the Conſtituent Parts of the Chriſtian Doctrine, That Reason it ſelf, when freed from the Clogs of Prejudice, tho' it can't Demonſtratively comprehend, muſt readily aſſent to, or at leaſt cannot fairly reject them.

If we allow the Teſtimony of the Sacred Oracles; which ought to be eſteem'd by all who pretend but to the

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Name of Christians, as he highest and most indisputable Authority in all Matters both of Faith and Practice: What can be more clear and Full than that of our Blessed Savior Himself — *I and my Father are One ?* Of S. John — *The Word was God* — *The Word was made Flesh* — *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost : And these Three are One.* Afterwards (speaking of Christ distinctly) — *This is the True God, and Eternal Life.* Of S. Paul, having mention'd our Savior, — *Who being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be Equal with God* — *Declared to be the Son of God with Power* — *Who is God over all, Blessed for evermore* — *The Glorious Gospel of the Blessed God* — *In Him dwells the Fulness of the Godhead bodily* — *Let all the Angels of God worship Him* — *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever* — &c. And in that memorable Benediction of the same Apostle — *The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost--?*

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And of S. Luke in his Collection of the Sacred *Acts*, where S. Peter sharply reprehends *Ananias* for Lying to the *Holy Ghost* ——— *Thou hast not lied unto Men, but unto God* ———: And again ——— *The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Paul and Barnabas* — &c. Tho' some very Learned Men, too deeply tinctur'd with Prejudice, have by a Kind of Sophistical Subtilty endeavour'd, not without great Unfairness, to give a quite Different Turn both to these and other Parallel Texts, by making them stoop to their Diminishing Glosses (as there are still too many who take a great deal of Pains to make themselves Miserable; by Everting, as far as in them lies, the Foundations, or lessening the Dignity and Efficacy of that Glorious Work of our Redemption); yet the gross Partiality and Violence offer'd to their genuine Sense, is so palpably evident, that the Truth has been rather illustrated than obscur'd thereby.

I n our Embracing these Supernatural *Mysteries*, propos'd in the Blessed Gospel as fit Subjects of our Faith,



'tis most safe and agreeable to their Sublime Nature, that we avoid too curious Speculations about the Possibility or Manner of their Existence ; by yielding a ready Assent to them in their Native Simplicity. 'Tis sufficient for our Belief, That they are grounded on the Veracity, Wisdom and Omnipotence of God ; which ought to Resolve or Superseede all our Doubts, and produce such a Stability of Spirit as Nothing can shake. Since an exact and curious Illustration of them was never design'd for the Province of Reason, 'twould be the highest Folly as well as an hazardous Attempt to involve them with greater Difficulties, by proposing so mean and insufficient a Test as our shallow Understanding ; and infinitely more profitable where that is Defective, to give the true Latitude and just Pre-eminence to our Faith. Reason and Natural Philosophy are not so clear, at the Best, but that they are subject to the Mists of Ignorance and Error ; even in many of their nice Disquisitions into Natural Causes, Productions and Events : And if so, 'twould

It would be the most Presumptuous Excursion for them to grasp at, or endeavour a Solution of, the *ra B'dn*, *Deep Things*, or *Hidden Wisdom* of God; which are happily reserv'd for a clearer Explication till we put off the present Clogs of Flesh, and reach that *Glorious Inheritance among the Saints in Light*.

FOR the Divine Authority and sure Conduct of the *Holy Scriptures*. If the most daring *Atheist*, or rigid *Sceptic*, would but lay aside the thick Vail of unreasonable Prejudice; and suffer themselves to make such Fair and Genuine Conclusions as themselves would readily admit in any other Case (And indeed the clearest and most unexceptionable to Reason it Self, so far as is Consistent with the Nature of Things, do necessarily occur) they could not persist in their miserable Diffidence and Opposition. If we duely consider the awful Majesty and Venerable Style of these, beyond all other Writings in the World; Looking backward to the Birth of Time and of all Created Beings, yea

even into the immense Bosom of Eternity, and forward to the certain Accomplishment of the most important tho' Mysterious, Prophecies ; Enjoyning the most Reasonable and advantageous Duties ; Condemning Sins, as most dangerous and detestable ; Promising the highest Rewards, suited to Intelligent Beings, Threatning proportionable Punishments for wilful Disobedience and Final Impenitence, &c. in such a manner as is only adapted to the Supream Authority of Heaven : Also their Antiquity and wonderful Preservation ; their Holy Design and Purifying Tendency ; their general Consent and excellent Harmony ; their prevailing Power and admirable Efficacy ; their profound Contrivance and amiable Scope, in promoting the Glory of God and the Ultimate Happiness of Mankind ; their Confirmation by eminent Miracles, and the concurring Testimonies of the Best of Men in all Ages : These, and many other Particulars that might be enumerated, are both a very pregnant Proof, against all unreasonable Cavils, of a Supernatural Origin and Divine Authority  
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instamp'd on every Part ; as well as a sufficient Caution against Trusting too confidently to any deceitful Improvements in Philosophical Reasoning, which are apt to heighten the Natural Vanity of the Mind, and prove an invincible Obstacle to the most usefull Knowledg, *i. e.* of God and our Selves : Whereas this would necessarily lead us, in a deep Sense of Humility, to contemplate the Glory of his Attributes, and the special Endearments of his Love.

As to that Great and Essential Article of the Christian Faith, the *Deity* of our Blessed *Savior* ; unhappily impugned by Some Degenerate Minds, which, to a dangerous Degree of Blasphemy, pay a much greater Deference to the erroneous Dictates of Carnal Reason than the Authority of Divine Revelation. If the most strong and invincible Proofs that could possibly have been desir'd or propounded, would satisfy the Scruples of such obstinate and indeed highly unreasonable Opponents ; the many Bright Evidences, and powerful Demonstrations already vouch-



vouchsaf'd to the World, must be allow'd by every unbiass'd Person as sufficient to that End. When we seriously animadvert the Concurrence of the *Holy Prophets* in their remote Predictions of the Certainty, Time, Manner, Excellent Ends and Blessed Effects of his *Mysterious Incarnation*; of His Divine Majesty conceal'd under that despicable outward Appearance; of the hard Entertainment of his Person and Doctrin from the World, especially from the strong Prejudice of those who were most celebrated for Learning and Knowledg in Divine Things: The Literal Accomplishments and particular Application of those very Prophecies: His exact Correspondence to the lively Types by which he had been represented under the *Jewish Dispensation*: His unwearied Labours in Doing Good to the Bodies and Souls of Men: His unparallel'd Humility, immaculate Righteousness, and compleat Obedience in Doing and Suffering the utmost that was requisite on the Behalf of Fallen Man: His many Stupendious Miracles; in Fasting so much beyond the Powers of Nature; Multiplying

tipling a poor Pittance of Provisions for the vast Multitudes that follow'd Him; Giving Strength to the Lame, Health to the Sick, Sight to the Blind and Life to the Dead, in the most powerful and instantaneous manner, acknowledg'd even by His inveterate Adversaries: That Convulsive Shock which the whole Frame of Nature suffer'd at the Resignation of his Temporal Life; together with the Centurion's Orthodox Confession thereupon; and the premature Escape of many Deceas'd Saints from the Bonds of Death, as joyful Harbingers of his Glorious Resurrection: And especially Raising Himself at the prefixed Time with Trophies of Glory and Triumph from that Dark State of Separation to which He had voluntarily Submitted; Conversing with his select Disciples for Forty Days successively; Manifesting himself to some Hundreds of other unquestionable Witnesses at once; and at last in the full View of many Spectators Gloriously Ascending to the Regions of Bliss: Soon after accomplishing his Sacred Promise in an Extraordinary Effusion of the Holy Spirit;

Spirit ; Propagating the Blessed Gospel in a *Series* of Astonishing Success (amidst the vehement Opposition of the implacable *Jews*, in Concert with the *Roman* Secular Powers) through the most Despicable Instruments ; whose Miraculous Conquests far outshone all the united Achievements of the greatest Monarchs ; Disposing their Numerous Converts to embrace those Saving Doctrins with Unanimity and Singleness of Heart : Raising His spotless Church in the most degenerate Times of *Jewish* and *Heathen* Superstitions ; Influencing, Governing and Enlarging it through all succeeding Ages ; and never suffering it to be totally Eclips'd by the thick Clouds of Error, Schism, or Apostasy : All those accumulated Wonders, enforc'd by many Direct and Positive Assertions in Holy Writ, together with the immediate Testimony of Heaven it self at his Baptism and Transfiguration, and of the Blessed Angels at his Nativity, Resurrection and Ascension ; are at least sufficient to satisfy such as have not bid Defiance to Reason, and the general Impressions of Natural Religion, in that most Comfortable, but incom-

incomprehensibly Glorious, Mystery of God Manifested in the Flesh. And if these can't prevail upon 'em to break through the strongest Barrs of Infidelity, 'tis to be fear'd an immediate Voice from Heaven, or special Messenger from the Dead, would be no less ineffectual.

THE Divine Wisdom was eminently visible in laying that Glorious Design of the Blessed Gospel in such a manner, as did equally tend to procure the Comfort, and promote the Holiness of Man. For whilst he lay under those strong Prejudices that must arise from the settled Apprehensions of God as an implacable Enemy, 'twas impossible to cherish any Regular Desires or Disposition to return towards Him : For Confusion and Terror are always inseparable from a prevailing Sense of Guilt. But through the whole System of this amiable Science, the Honour of God is represented as fully repair'd, his Justice compleatly satisfied, and his delightful Propension to pardon upon sincere Repentance, in the most Pathetic manner proclaim'd : And  
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all these confirm'd by the highest Instance of his Love (far surpassing the Conceptions of Men or Angels) the unspeakable Gift of his Son; who finish'd the hard Work of our Redemption on his Cross, pass'd through the disconsolate Vale of Death, rose again in Triumph, and advancing the Human Nature to the Glory above, became the *First Fruits* and most comfortable Pledg of a Blessed Resurrection to all that sleep in Him. Thus the Almighty draws us with the strongest Cords of his Love; conquers our natural Aversion; dissipates our Fears; increases our Faith; sets before us the most powerful Motives to Obedience; guides us by the Counsell of his Holy Word; follows us with the necessary Aids of his Spirit; and at last brings us to the happy Consummation of our Hopes in the perpetual Enjoyment of Himself.

As 'tis only through the clear Revelation of the Holy Scriptures that the lively Knowledg of Man's Reconciliation by the Death of Christ, is convey'd; and that Remission of  
Sin

Sin is to be obtain'd alone through Faith in his Blood : So they are likewise the most perfect and unerring Rule of our Practice, as well as the sure Standard of our Faith. Though the Light of Nature was sufficient to discover Sins of the Grosser Kind ; a much straiter Rule was requisite to detect the secret Corruption and Obliquity of the Heart, and to rectify the less discernable Irregularities of the Life. Nay the Learned *Pharisees* themselves, who enjoy'd the more veiled part of the Holy Oracles, and were not a little zealous for 'em too, were guilty of palpable Perversion and false Glosses on the very Rules which they pretended to walk by ; vainly pretending to correct their Strictness by too Favourable Explications : Neither could they discern from their written Precepts, much less could the general Law of Nature take notice of, that Dangerous and most Damning Sin of Infidelity which the Holy Gospel of our Blessed Savior discovers, together with its deep Guilt and Aggravations. Nor does the Evangelic Rule only make known our Obliquities,  
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but the sure Way to conquer and redress them ; imparts the clearest Knowledge of the Divine Will ; sets before us the most perfect Pattern for our Imitation ; proposes the most comfortable Relief for our Infirmities, and Defects ; and gives the most encouraging Assurance of an Happy Issue in the End.

THAT Discriminating Favour of Heaven which bestows these Blessed Means of Saving Knowledge on any particular Nations or Parts of the World, whilst others are suffer'd to remain in the gross Darkness of polluted Nature ; calls for suitable Returns of Gratitude and Fruitfulness : Without which these inestimable Privileges will at last lie inexpressibly heavy on their Hands, when the Great Distributor of the Talents shall appear, with his Glorious Retinue, to take a general Account of them. Whatever the Profane Sensualist, the disguis'd Hypocrite, or the Negligent Christian, may suggest to the contrary, his Expectations will then be proportion'd to the Measure which He has bestow'd ;

stow'd ; and, if we dare credit his own Assertion, *Tyre* and *Sidon* [Places unacquainted with those happy Means of Reconciliation] shall receive a more favourable Doom than *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida* [Which had been the obstinate Witnesses of his Blessed Doctrine and Glorious Miracles]. To have no other Sense of the Transcendent Benefits of Christianity, than as they are a common Hereditary Right ; no Experience of their genuine Effects, in changing the Deprav'd Bent of the Mind, restraining the Sensitive Appetite, and conforming the Life and Actions, in some real, tho' imperfect, Degree, to the Heavenly Author of that Excellent Institution ( who was the Great Example of Holy Obedience) ; To have contributed Nothing to the Common Service of Religion, but rather lessen'd its Interest and Reputation in the World, and, by a Dissolute, Careless or Irregular Life, reflected a Disparagement on its Righteous Ways ; will no more avail than that Blind Confidence of the inflexible *Jews* in their Lineal Descent and Ancient Typical Privileges, so horribly

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bly perverted and abus'd, whilst they were the bitterest Enemies to the very *Messiah* whom they pretended to wait for. This will render our Case infinitely more Deplorable than of Those who never heard the Joyful Sound of the *Evangelic* Dispensation; whose proper Tendency is to bring *Glory to God, Peace on Earth, and Good-Will towards Men*; by Teaching them to deny all *Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts*, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present *World*. The Just, tho' Unsearchable, Judgments of Divine Wisdom and Omniscience in a long Rejection of those *Natural Branches*, through their inveterate Obstinacy, and bringing in the *Gentile World*, tho' more wild and uncultivated, to share in the rich and enlivening Vertues of the *True Olive Tree*; *S. Paul*, their Great Apostle, very pathetically urges as the strongest Motive to Thankfulness, Humility, and all Kinds of Fruitful Improvement; and enforces it with a very memorable Caution, *Left These*, being also, through Presumption or Inadvertency, involv'd in the same Guilt, should fall under

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an equal, or rather more Conclusive, Sentence; whereas *the Receiving of Those* (which He seems implicitly to foretel) will be as *Life from the Dead*.

A SERIOUS Reflexion on that Miserable State of complicated Evils, from which we are happily freed by a Right Application of these incomparable Benefits, is necessary to give us a just Value of them; without which our Estimate will be infinitely short, and altogether unbecoming Reasonable Creatures. When we duly consider the wretched and most debasing Servitude of Sin; the impetuous Fury of Disorder'd Passions, and unbridled Lusts; the insupportable Tyranny of Satan, who claims an absolute Power over all Mankind as his Prisoners of War; the strong Allurements of Sensitive Pleasures, which inchant the Superior Faculties and stifle all Desires of Liberty; the disquieting Stroaks of that just Accuser in our Bosoms, whom none can silence or escape; the anxious Fears of Death, and those accumulated Treasures of *Wrath to come*:

This will inspire our Souls with a vigorous Activity ; and raise the languid Affections to sincere and ardent, tho' disproportion'd, Returns of Love, Obedience, and Resignation, to that immense Fountain of Goodness and Mercy which has, at so dear a Rate, accomplish'd our Deliverance, and purchas'd, by a Nobler Title than that of Creation, an absolute Sovereignty over Us. And when we Consider further the *Easie Yoke* that He enjoyns, which is no other than the most perfect Freedom, *viz.* To receive Him, with an intire Assent of the Will and Affections, both as *a Prince and a Savior* ; to submit to his Scepter as well as to claim the Benefits of his Sacrifice ; together with those happy Consequents, the most solid and unshaken Peace, Stability of Mind, Rectitude of Judgment, Conquest of all irregular Passions, Pardon of involuntary Failings, Contempt of the World, and well-grounded Hopes of being *for ever with Him* at the End of a very Short and uncertain Life ; 'Twill appear an admirable Condescension That He should so far be *satisfied with the Travel*

*Travel of his Soul*, as not only to accept, but put a Value upon the small Return of our most Elevated Affections or Delightful Service.

FROM the Glorious Combination of infinite Wisdom and Love, which so eminently appears in that admirable and Harmonious Revelation of the Divine Will, wherein the Wel-being of Mankind is principally concern'd; it is but a Reasonable Inference, That they, for whom so much has been done, and such Mighty Things are yet in Reserve, should earnestly employ their most unclouded Thoughts in studying to know and Understand it more fully. As this Kind of Knowledge is, beyond Comparison, the most profitable; so 'tis attended with the most solid and satisfactory Pleasure. 'Tis most suited to an Intelligent Being; because it affords the Brightest Discovery of the Supreme Good; and displays such an infinite Variety, such inexhaustible Fulness and Immensity, as is more than sufficient to satisfy the most enlarged Desires. In all other Kinds of Science, both Speculative



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and Practical, there is some Allay of Uncertainty or Defect, to pall the Appetite, and render the Satisfaction incompleat ; verifying that Enigmatical Assertion of the best qualified *Judg* — *He that increases Knowledg, increases Sorrow* ; as if He had said, “ The greater Pitch a Man arrives at, the more sensibly he is affected with the Insufficiency of that Knowledg, both to supply his Defects, and to satisfy his Desires : ” Which will the rather appear, if we consider that Such Knowledg is at best calculated for the Meridian of this Life, and makes no Provision for Death or Eternity. But to Study and Contemplate the Evangelic Doctrin of Salvation, with its Sacred Mysteries, is far otherwise : ’Tis the *Word of Truth* which came down from Heaven ; and is alone sufficient both to shew us the Right Way and bring us safely thither. By its Blessed Effects, it carries a convincing Evidence of its Divine Original ; and, however Men may err in their Opinions about it, is always the same, being immutable as its Blessed Author and Glorious Object :

ject: And the Knowledge that it imparts to every sincere, humble and unprejudic'd Mind, consists not in Speculative Notions or uncertain Opinions, but the most clear, solid and satisfactory Apprehension. Whilst other Kinds of inferior Study inform the Understanding without purifying the Soul, this inspires it with a Superlative Love of God, with a just Abhorrence of Sin, and a more full Conformity to the Divine Image. Hereby the wand'ring Thoughts are most happily fix'd, and best secur'd against the great Variety of irregular Excursions. For, as the Mind is usually perplex'd with Endless Inquietude in its overcurious or too eager Pursuit of other Enquiries; In this, it returns to its proper Rest; like the wearied Dove, to that protecting Ark from whence she came; Or the wavering Needle, to its attractive Pole. With the highest Reason therefore did that Learned *Apostle*, who was so great a Proficient in other, tho' the better Sort of, Studies, *determine to Know Nothing comparatively save Christ and Him Crucified*: And He lays it down as a most

uncontrovertible Maxim, That Great  
is the Mystery of Godliness : God ma-  
nifested in the Flesh ; justified in the  
Spirit ; seen of Angels ; Preach'd unto  
the Gentiles ; Believed on in the World ;  
Received up to Glory.

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## EVANGELIC OBEDIENCE.

**T**HE Transcendent Dignity of the *Christian Religion* is in a special Manner conspicuous in the Excellency of its Ends propos'd, and Rectitude of the Means conducing thereunto. As it tends to the highest Advancement of Human Nature ; it necessarily excludes whatsoever is Mean, Sordid, and Unworthy of a Rational Agent. Every Person therefore that is thus happily influenc'd, will at all Times very carefully preserve a tender Regard to all the Divine Commands ; and not, as is too common with Some who would be thought Sound in Practice, make a partial Choice of such as least thwart either their Vicious Inclinations, or Sinister Pursuit of present Secular Interests. The Blessed Gospel does not only shew Us the Deformity of our Lapsed State,



State, but the certain Means of our Happy Recovery, and an unshaken Assurance that we may attain it. And, as all Natural Desires and Operations usually proceed from an adequate Principle, by which they are Regulated and Determin'd: So, such an intire Assent to that Glorious Revelation of the Divine Will, on the Sacred Terms propos'd, as gives it a full Possession of the Soul, and conquers all the Enmity of our Deprav'd Reason, is the true Principle of Christianity: Which delightfully exerts it self in the Genuine Fruits of Universal Obedience to God, and Charitable Beneficence to Mankind. Hereby the strongest Counter-motions of the Flesh, with its Treacherous Allies, the World and the Devil, are gradually impair'd; those dangerous Temptations, from the innumerable Examples of others in a Dissolute Course, successfully resisted; the Understanding freed from its thick Clouds of Error and Prejudice; the Affections restor'd to their Native Order and Vivacity, in the most delightful Choice of Invisible Objects; and, in a Word, all the united Faculties of  
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the Inner Man sincerely engag'd in those Regular appointed Ways of Serving God, which lead to the Ultimate Enjoyment of Him.

AND indeed He must have made but very little Progress in the Paths of Religion and Vertue, who does not readily assent to this undeniable Truth, That, in Respect only to present Experience, and abstracted from all Apprehensions of those superabundant Rewards in another Life, they are infinitely preferable to the Grosser Enjoyments of Sense; even, Such as are most innocent and allowable: And if so, much more, to all those that Depress the Rational Faculties beneath a common Degree of Brutality. As These, in a way of Eminence, are truly styl'd by that inspir'd Exemplar of Wisdom, *The Ways of Pleasantness*; so they are no less, *The Paths of Peace*: And being suited to the Nobler Part, the hidden Recess of the Mind, when compar'd with Sensual Pleasures, they justly claim such Superiority as the Soul does over those sluggish and corruptible Organs which it actuates and enlivens

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THIS Rectif'd Frame, or New Nature, which is the only fit Subject for acceptable Obedience, is a Treasure not to be found among the Ruins of the Old *Adam*; otherwise it would not have requir'd so dear a Purchase as that *Precious Blood of the Everlasting Covenant*, nor the Abrogation of the *First* through its Insufficiency: For in the Degenerate or Fallen State, which had altogether effac'd the Divine Image, and brought an Universal Disorder on the Intellectual Faculties, there remain'd not the least Footsteps of such Rectitude; no Gusts of Pleasure or Happiness, but what were suited either to the corrupt Bent of the Mind, or the vitiated Organs of Sense; nor a Capacity so much as to look up aright towards the Eternal Fountain of Life.

THAT its Origin is wholly Supernatural, is therefore undeniably Evident, Because its Genuine Tendency is to counterpoise, weaken, and at last happily root out all those inherent Principles of Darkness, Ignorance, Enmity,

mity, and Averſation to the Divine Will (the Secret Springs of all Evil Habits) which had not only tainted but univerſally deprav'd the Powers and Faculties of Nature. And then it's not to be wonder'd at, if a Mind, thus effectually reduc'd to ſo amiable a Temper, ſhould, from its own Delightful Propenſion, exert it ſelf in all becoming Acknowledgements and Grateful Returns to the Bounteous Author of its aſtoniſhing Recovery; tho' no Acceſſion of Future Bleſſedneſs, or impulſive Promise of the moſt perfect Joys in ſure Reverſion, were complicated therewith. 'Twould be rather ſtrange if any conſiderate Perſon, thus happily actuated, could be ſo highly Diſingenuous as to ſhew, in any ſettled or indulg'd Habit, a contrary Deportment: And they that think otherwiſe, however they may be flatter'd with empty Notions, have too great Reason to ſuſpect themſelves yet *in the Gall of Bitterneſs and Bond of Iniquity.*

MORE eſpecially, Since the Bleſſed Author of our Salvation not only ſtoop'd



stoop'd so low as to quit the Heavenly Mansions of Bliss, and lay aside, for a Time, the Brightness of his Eternal Majesty, or (as *S. Paul* expresses it) to *empty Himself*, by putting on the *Form of a Servant*, and undergoing the severest Sufferings that could be inflicted, for the Redemption of Miserable Captives to a State of the most Glorious Freedom; But, in Condescension to their Infirmities, and for their greater Encouragement to embrace and persevere in the Strait Path of his Easy Commands, as well as to heighten the just Sense of their Endearments to Him, proposes both a certain Participation of his own inconceivable Glory, and engages the Comforting Aids of his Holy Spirit for their Guidance and Support under all intervening Difficulties in the Way thereunto: If all these United Attractives have not their proper Effect; to excite the purest Reciprocal Affection, and sincerest Returns of Delightful Obedience; though Men may please themselves with the general Title of Christians, they can have no true Evidence of any *Part or Lot* in this most important Affair.

A s

As our Love to the Holy Ways of Religion and their Glorious Author, must be sincere and unfeign'd ; so it must be the Supreme or Governing Passion in our Souls. The most intire and elevated Affection that is consistent with the present Frailty of Human Nature, is too too little, and bears no Proportion to the Immensity of his Love ; which was more heighten'd in giving Himself for our Ransom, than in conferring the Ultimate Reward of Heavenly Glory. Whilst ours is complicated with a present and an Eternal Advantage, there's the greatest Reason imaginable that it should be Superlative, and preside over all the secret Propensions of the Heart, as well as Overt Acts of the Life. A less Degree is not sufficient to render the whole Course of our Obedience Chearful, Constant, and Regular ; to preserve always a lively Impression of his Benefits, with their genuine and indispensable Effects ; to commemorate his Passion with a Worthy Deportment ; to Mortify our inherent Corruptions, and repell the numerous Train of Flattering Rivals which continually accost us. R E-

RELIGION is not so Dry and insipid a Thing, as the greater Part of Mankind usually represent it : Neither does it destroy the Ancient Laws of Reasonable Nature, but exalts and establishes them on a far Nobler Foundation. If we have any just Pretensions thereto, 'twill soon manifest its Diffusive Vertue, and, *like Leaven*, gradually change and assimilate the whole Lump; *i. e.* 'twill shew it self as a Governing Principle, to Purify the Heart and Reform the Life, producing both the necessary internal Habits of Faith, Love, Resignation, &c. and all those External Duties which have Respect to its common Interest, and the general Welfare of Mankind, tho' it does not exert it self in strong exorbitant Flights of Fancy, or sensible heightening of the Natural Passions in Rapturous Ecstasies and Delusive Conceits of Extraordinary Inspiration (as some too Enthusiastically have imagin'd) but in Soundness of Judgment, Clearness of Apprehension, and Stability of Mind; yet 'tis powerful enough to keep

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Keep the Sensitive Appetite regulated and subdu'd, the Thoughts free, chaste and unbyass'd, and the Affections steadily rais'd towards the *Things that are above*. And as this is the Brightest Ornament, so 'tis the Great and Primary Concern of Human Life; according to that memorable Injunction of our *Blessed Savior*, to *seek First the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness thereof*: Nor can the many contrary Instances of such Sordid Spirits as either carelessly postpone these momentous Affairs to the fleeting Trifles of Time, or make them subservient to some mean Secular Aims, invalidate the Assertion, or in any measure palliate a Remissness in the Duty.

THIS Excellent Habit, or Complication of Heavenly Vertues, is so Essentially necessary, and adds such an enhancing Worth to all other Qualifications, that without it a Man can scarce be truly said to live: 'Tis like a soft Stream that rises incessantly from an overflowing Fountain; and (to follow the Scripture Metaphor) *springs up unto Everlasting Life*. Tho',  
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in its Ordinary Course, it may meet with Oppositions strong enough to check or divert it for a Season; yet these *Holy Waters* will rise (like those of the Sanctuary in *Ezekiel's* Vision) and never cease pressing forward till the Obstacle be remov'd, and they run smoothly in their proper Channel as before. None of these Darkning Intervals or strong Countermotions can either lessen its Universality, or impeach its Sincerity. 'Tis not only a Stranger but an utter Enemy to all Sinister Ends; makes no Politic Reserve for a Bow in the House of Rimmon, tho' Honour and Interest lie at Stake; indulges no Beloved Lust, tho' like a Darling *Herodias*; when it stands in Competition with a Divine Command; *confers not with Flesh and Blood* in any of those Great Things which concern the Glory of God, the Honour of Religion and the Soul's Everlasting Happiness. Like the *King's Daughter*, 'tis *Glorious within*; and as the *Rose of Sharon*, Beautiful without: And notwithstanding all the Contempt, or hard Entertainment it usually meets with from the Unthinking

## *Of Evangelic Obedience.*

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ing Part of Mankind, has such a real Lustre attending it as Nothing else can equal. To Crown all, 'tis of the longest Duration : Makes the Possessor to flourish in Old Age, under the sensible Decays of the Outward Man : It abides with him, as the most Faithful Friend, to the last Period of Life ; and not only so, but, to his great Comfort, passes over with Him into the Other World.

CONFORMITY to the Life of Christ is the very Summ of Evangelic Obedience ; and an Essential Qualification for the inestimable Benefits of his Death. As He was the only Perfect and absolute Pattern of Holiness, in whom the consummate Beauty thereof shin'd forth with unborrow'd Rays : So, a Delightful Imitation of Him, in the Habitual Exercise of Derivative Goodness, is the Principal Condition of the Gospel Covenant ; to which Pardon of Sin, Acceptance with God, Adoption into the Heavenly Family, and the Crowning Reward of Future Glory, are inseparably annex'd. Tho' *Fear* and *Hope* may deservedly claim a

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Part in this Happy Renovation ; yet *Faith* and *Love* are the Cominanding Principles, and most Powerful Attractives to Obedience : One always represents the Transcendent Beauty of invisible Objects ; and the other utterly excludes an Habitual Allowance of any Thing Morally or Preceptively Evil ; as inconsistent with the Essential Purity of the Divine Nature, and the Glorious Design of our Savior's Sufferings. Reason may suggest the Practice of Vertue from a Principle of Self-Love : But this Supernatural or Divine Quality, reaches the First *Idea's* of Vice in the Thoughts and Affections, sanctifies the Whole Man, and expresses it self by an Universal Deference to the Authority and Directions of God's *Revealed Will*.

THE Excellency, Freedom, Agreeableness, and inestimable Privileges of the Evangelic Dispensation, will appear with the highest Advantage, if we consider the numerous Injunctions of the Ceremonial Law, the obscure Types and faint Representations of Divine Things, with the intolerable Yoke

Yoke of Legal Discipline, both in Abstinence and Observations: All which our Blessed Redeemer in his own Person has compleatly fulfill'd and utterly abolish'd; by Rending *the Vail*, breaking down the strong *Wall of Partition*, and introducing the Real or Substantial Righteousness which was signified thereby. As Christians are Dead to those *inferior Elements*; so they are oblig'd to manifest the Principles of a Spiritual Life, by an Holy Obedience to those purer Precepts which that Blessed Institution recommends and enjoins. These are far less Numerous, and better suited to the Spirituality of Divine Worship; consisting, for the most Part, in Holy Contemplations and Pious Efforts of Love, Gratitude and Praise to their Beneficent Author: But more especially the Two Visible Pledges, or Confirming Seals, of his inestimable Love (wherein the whole *Complex* of Saving Benefits, and the lively Application of them is most significantly express'd) being free from External Pomp and Ceremonious Obscurity, Simple in their Nature, and easily apprehended in their



Importance ; are excellently suited to the Relief of our present Infirmities ; to excite the most Pious Affections, and give an enlivening Vigor to our languid and imperfect Services.

By these Distant Circumferential Lines, the Soul in its most Devoted Elevations may in some Degree ascend towards the Eternal Center of Blessedness, wherein they terminate. For, if there be at Present something so attractive, so suitable to the Taste of our Immaterial Part, and so Superlatively Satisfactory, in a Course of Regular Piety (tho', at Best, too much shaded with Imperfections) ; as all that are truly Serious must acknowledg in their Brightest Intervals : If the Holy *Psalmist* esteem'd this as his *Chief Joy* ; expressing it often, by the most moving Comparisons, as his onely Relish of Life. If the Noble *Galeacius*, with many Others, thought it infinitely preferable to all the accumulated Riches of this World : 'Tis but a Natural Inference, That the Future Satisfaction of the Soul, when possess'd of a Glorious Immortality and the Supreme Object

ject of its Love, will be inconceivably Great; not only having carried with it all those Pious Habits and Holy Propensions into the Other World, free from the numerous Clogs that now unhappily bear them down, but finding them infinitely heighten'd and enlarg'd to the utmost Extent of its own Boundless Capacity.

THE Principal *Virtues* which are Essential to, and eminently adorn *Christianity*, beyond all other Shadows of Religion, as also imprint a Distinguishing Lustre on the Conversation of its Sincere Voraries; are *Humility*, *Self-Denial*, *Universal Charity*, *Contentment*, *Resignation* and *Subservience* to the Glory of God, as the Highest End of all their Actions. Herein are necessarily included, an Awful Sense of the Divine Sovereignty, infinite Goodness, and inexpressible Condescension; a due Respect to his Equitable Laws; a Compassionate Benignity to Mankind; and a Submissive Return of Adoration and Praise to the Sole Author of our Being and Supreme Fountain of our Benefits. But, To touch a little on Particulars; G 4 HU-

*HUMILITY* is the Peculiar Offspring of the Blessed Gospel, and the Brightest Jewel that adorns it: 'Tis no where else to be found in its true Latitude, free from Disguise or Al-  
 lay. Man's Vitiated Reason has no Affinity with it; for their Natures are as irreconcilable as Fire and Water. As it helps to free us from our contracted Stains; so 'tis likewise the most Beautifying Vertue; since Nothing more becomes us as Dependent Creatures, or as Returning *Prodigals*. This brightens the Beams of Faith, and encreases the Fervor of Love: It suffers us not to transgress a Decent Modesty under the most Prosperous Smiles of Heaven; nor to want a Submissive Patience under its severest Frowns. 'Tis the Root of Gratitude, and the Spring of all acceptable Obedience. It lets us know what we are; from whence we are fallen; to what Hopes we are rais'd; and what Acknowledgments are due to the Stupendious Means of our Recovery.

*SELF.*

**SELF-DENIAL** is a Vertue truly *Heroic*, and the Noblest Confirmation of Humble Gratitude ; where-in the Dignity of Human Nature appears to the highest Advantage : But what gives it the most enhancing or rather only Worth, is that Principle of Divine Love which imparts the secret Springs of Life, Beauty and Conduct : Otherwise 'tis possible for it to become the Servant of Vice, by cherishing Man's inherent Pride and Vanity. A Becoming Sense of those inexpressible Benefits confer'd on us by our Blessed *Savior*, who was the greatest Instance of Self-denial that ever could have been manifested to the World, will suggest it as a very Reasonable Injunction, That we should not only subdue all Kinds of Vicious Inclinations, but lay a Restraint on our insatiable Appetites in the Use of Lawful Things ; and also readily subject, upon the clear Directions of an Extraordinary Providence, Life it self, with all the Comforts thereof, to that Victorious Love which He has made the Test of following Him aright.

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*CHARITY* is an Essential Part of the Divine Image ; and the liveliest Transcript of a Christian, whereby He makes the nearest Advances towards his Glorious Original. 'Tis deservedly esteem'd the Highest of the Evangelic Vertues ; because it gives an ennobling Value and inimitable Lustre to all the Rest : As *S. Paul* largely argues, from an impartial Comparison with them, in their Natures, Consequents and Duration. For, as *neither Circumcision nor Uncircumcision avail any thing, without Such Faith as worketh by Love* : So neither this or that Opinion, nor any External Privileges, Reputation or Esteem ; nor yet the Internal Habits and Brightest Ornaments of the Mind, can recommend us to Divine Favour and Acceptance ; whilst we want this Fundamental Principle, which, like Spiritual Salt, is so necessary to Season the whole Conversation. As Men, it teaches us to be always Humble, Candid, and compassionate in our Thoughts and Deportment ; forward to Relieve, and free from Judging ; And as Christians,

ftians, it calls for the Noblest Instances of Affection and Sympathy which our Natures are capable of ; even, if need be, to the voluntary Hazard of Life it felf. 'Twas fo far the Darling Subject and moft Delightful Theme, to that Great Builder of the *Gentile Church*, That in One Place He calls it *The Fulfilling of the Law* ; at another, *The End of the Commandment* ; at a Third, *The Bond of Perfection*, &c. And as it proceeds from a much Nobler Spring than the pureft Affections of Nature ; fo it primarily refpects the moft Sacred and amiable Ties of a Spiritual Relation ; exerting it felf with the greateft Freedom and Delight towards fuch as bear the indelible Characters of unaffected Piety ; tho' not without a ready Beneficence to all Mankind. It leaves not the leaft Room for a Rigid or Cenforious Temper, or unkind Constructions of any Thing that may admit a more Favourable Turn ; but preserves a juft Sense of the Divine Patience, Forgiveness and Benignity ; and makes Men unwearied in Forgiving Injuries to their Fellow Mortals, tho' the Number swell  
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never so high ; according to that Supernatural and Unparallel'd Law of our Blessed Savior.

**CONTENTMENT** in every Condition, is also a necessary Branch of Christian Obedience ; being no less our Duty, than a Substantial Part of our present Happiness. It excludes all Murmuring and Repining at the Allotments of Providence ; all Solicitude and anxious Thoughts about Future Events, further than such Precautions as are within the Sphere of Human Prudence ; suppresses all Corrupt, Covetous, or Ambitious Inclinations, irregular Passions, and inordinate Desires : Lets us know That Transitory Objects are unsuited to the proper Gust of Spiritual Beings, and oftner prove Obstacles than Accommodations to our Pursuit of the most Substantial Benefits : That our Real Treasure is secur'd above the Reach of any Temporal Changes : That we are *unworthy of the least Mercies* enjoy'd ; and hold them by no other Tenure than the Bounty of Heaven : That a little with the Divine Favour and Blessing,

Blessing, is not only sufficient, but usually most safe and convenient for Us : And that Afflictions, if well improv'd, have many real Advantages attending them ; both as they help us to make a Right Estimate of all Earthly Enjoyments, and raise our Minds into a better Preparation for that Glorious Inheritance above.

*RESIGNATION* and Subservience to the Divine Glory, are likewise an Essential Part of the *Evangelic Covenant* ; which implies no less than the most Solemn and intire Dedication of our selves, including the most exalted Powers and united Faculties of our Souls, together with our Dearest Temporal Interests, to the Supreme Love and Faithful Service of our Great *Benefactor* ; who has purchas'd an absolute Title thereunto by the inestimable Price of his own Blood. Whilst the Carnal Mind is most delightfully employ'd in making *Provision for the Flesh, to fulfill the Lusts thereof* ; 'tis the Chief Care and steady Endeavour of Such as duely consider the Foederal Engagements of Christianity,



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stianity, to suppress all those Exorbitant and impetuous Desires which are either excited by Worldly Objects, or proceed from the inherent Pravity of Nature ; to *shine as Lights in the World*, and adorn their Ennobling Profession by an agreeable Conversation ; putting to Silence the malicious Cavils of unreasonable Opposers ; but especially to imitate, as much as possible, their Great Pattern of Obedience and Resignation, in promoting the Glory of God, the Interest of Religion, and the Common Welfare of Mankind.

To anticipate the Damnable Doctrins and Practice of such as would pervert the Riches of Evangelic Grace to a Liberty in Sinning ; and correct the unwarrantable Partiality of Others, who would straiten it too much, like the Rigid *Pharisees*, by their Narrow Apprehensions ; Our Blessed *Savior*, in that memorable Sermon on the Mount, and many other Places, illustrates and enforces, by the liveliest Arguments imaginable, the Purity, Latitude and unalterable Obligations of

of the *Moral Law*, its Harmony with, and Subservience to, the Great Design of the Gospel Dispensation, in Establishing Universal Benignity and Love. He First frees it from the Dark'ning, and almost Ridiculous, Glosses of *Pharisaical* Interpreters; who were more taken up with the Punctilio's of the Letter, than the true Scope and Intention of the Law-giver: And then, Descanting on the several Kinds of Inhibition, He carries it beyond the Gross Act, or Principal Fountain, to all those little Distant Springs which secretly, and too often without Human Cognisance, tend thereunto. On the Subject of Murder, He equally condemns Rash Anger and Opprobrious Words, which are Design'd to injure or wound the Reputation. Lascivious Glances of the Eye, if they are meditated and indulg'd, and all secret Defilement of the Soul with impure Thoughts, He censures no less than Actual Pollution. The Acts of Neighbour-like Kindness and Compassion He diffuses to all that partake of the same Common Nature, and the Calamities incident thereto: Enjoyns Us to Love,  
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Pray for, and by the Best Means endeavour to promote the real Good of, Such as undeservedly injure and implacably hate Us: But above all He enforces, from his own unparallel'd Example, that God-like Principle of Beneficence, together with the most Affectionate Sympathy, and all other Kinds of mutual Endearments, between Those who, by the *Obedience of Faith*, are become Fellow-Members of his Mystical Body, and Joynr-Heirs of the same Glorious Hopes.

**CHRISTIANITY** therefore is, beyond Comparison, the most Excellent, Perfect and Amiable Institution, that ever was or could be manifested to the World, and most truly agreeable to the Ancient Dignity of Human Nature; in as much as it does not depress, but rectify and exalt on a far Nobler *Basis*, the obscure, tho' Permanent, Principles of Natural Religion. The Genuine Effects of it are *Love, Joy, Peace, Gentleness, &c.* shining forth with inimitable Brightness in the various Parts of a Well-order'd Conversation; and all happily  
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reflecting a just Tribute of Praise to the immense Fountain of Goodness and Mercy. As it brings Men to the truest Knowledge of God and his Reveal'd Will ; so likewise of Themselves : Which always issues in the profoundest Humility and a Delightful Contemplation of his Glorious Attributes. 'Tis the Best Expedient to soften the Roughness of Men's Natural Tempers ; to change their Austerity into a Becoming Meekness and Condescension ; remove all the unhappy *Remora's* of Prejudice and Animosity ; and inviolably Unite them, on the most Endearing Principles and surest Foundations, in One common or inseparable Interest. Did we but more sincerely look at the Essence and Ends of Religion, together with those other Means that most directly tend to the general Good of the *Civil* Community, than at the Distinguishing Names of Parties and Opinions ; What Beautiful Scenes might we not yet expect to see in the World ! With what Advantage would the general Interest of the Reformation, and of our Establish'd Church in particular, be strengthen'd

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and advanc'd ; its Sacred Ministry due-ly Honour'd, Encourag'd, and awfully Obey'd ! How easily would Vice and Prophaneness, with all other Harbin-gers of *Atheism*, appear in their Na-tive Colours ; branded with a Public *Odium*, as the greatest Deformities of Human Nature ; and all the Artificial Disguise of Envy, Malice and Detra-ction, vanish like the thin Mists of a Morning Cloud ! And how heartily might we joyn, not only in Pious Wishes but Successful Endeavours, for promoting an Universal Happiness both as *Christians* and *Men* !

VERY justly therefore may Such Suggestions as these, reprehend the growing Prejudice and Partiality of the Present Times ; which our Unfriend-ly Distinctions have both begun and hitherto unhappily Fomented ; to the utter Exclusion of all due Regard ei-ther to real Merit or Substantial Good-ness. For whilst the Warmth of mis-guided Zeal, like a Feverish Ferment in the Body Mystical, hurries Us be-yond the just Bounds of a *Christian Temper*, 'tis no Wonder if we over-look

look some of the most Essential Duties, when they seem repugnant to our Private Interests, Disorder'd Passions, or Sinister Aims ; and instead of looking up to the Nobler Dictates of Religion, shamefully forfeit all Pretensions to Reason and Humanity. How greedily will too many watch for the Failings of Others ; not with a Brotherly Compassion to spread a Veil over, but expose them with the highest Aggravations ; that they may the more plausibly justify Themselves in far greater Irregularities ! They will not stick to lay open their Wounds to the uttermost ; but then the *Oyl and Wine* are wanting : They have no Design to Heal, but to render 'em the more incurable ! And that which heightens both the Wonder and Guilt, is That all this Animosity and Censure is not between *Christians* and *Infidels* ; nor yet between Christians of a Different Denomination, Such as agree only in the Fundamental Points of Doctrine and Faith (which is too near an Affinity for admitting such a Deportment) but in the constant Communion of the same *Reformed Church*

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(Whose Charitable Principles and Ennobling Latitude surpass all other National Churches in the Universe) and equally pretend to be affected with a just Concern for its Safety, and a Necessary Zeal for promoting the General Interest of Religion. As Nothing can be so highly Disingenuous, and Destructive to the Blessed Ends of Christianity, *viz. The Glory of God, and Salvation of Mens Souls*; or to the Necessary and Discriminating Fruits thereof, *i. e. Integrity of Life, in a Course of Regular Piety, and Universal Love to Mankind*: So 'tis of all Things the greatest Obstacle to a Common Temporal Happiness, and the Favourable Blessings of Heaven; and ought to be rank'd among the grossest Enormities of which Reasonable Nature is susceptible; justly deserving the highest Detestation, and altogether unfit to accompany Men into the Other World.

To Share then this pernicious Extream and inexcusable Folly, without presuming to fix it intirely on Either Side; as the most Hopeful Way  
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for its gradual Disappearance, if an inflexible Rigor has not wholly born down all impartial Consideration : We may safely apply *S. Paul's* Monitorial Assertion, as very opposite to Both — *Ye have not so learned Christ* : And indeed the general Current of the Evangelic Writings turns quite the Other Way. No Vertues are so frequently and pathetically Recommended as Gentleness, Condescension and mutual Forbearance, from that most truly Coercive Principle of Charity : And even whilst we can't be so Happy as to see an Universal Harmony in Opinions (which of all Things would be most valuable) we are oblig'd to Endeavour, as the most Probable Means for effecting it, to Preserve *the Unity of the Spirit*, in that Sacred and inviolable *Bond of Peace*, which is not only common to the Members of Christ's Mystical Body, but the Highest Badg of their Assimilation to Him. *S. Peter* in his Advice to the Scatter'd *Saints*, recommends this Amiable Temper as the true Spirit and *Genius* of Christianity ; and strongly enforces it from that Great Example of unparallel'd



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Love in the Blessed *Jesus*, who out of his immense Charity had Humbled Himself to Do and Suffer so much on their Behalf. And *S. Paul*, from that Glorious Pattern of Humility and his own Delightful Practice, often insists on this most weighty and Essential Point. When He observ'd Some to be so partially busied in applauding their Distinct Societies, as to promote Strife, Alienation and Censorious Disputes; and Others too Fond of joyning the Mosaic Rites to that Brighter and more Spiritual Institution; He declares it as the Principal Scope to which all his Endeavours were directed, That they might *steadily Follow those Things which tend to Peace and mutual Edification.*

SINCE therefore the genuine Tendency of the Blessed Gospel is to repair the vast Breaches of Human Nature with unspeakable Advantage, by giving Birth to a more Excellent Temper, for the Happy Establishment of *Peace on Earth and Good Will both towards and among Men*; as the Best Qualification for ascribing *Glory to God*

*God in the Higheſt*, which will be their Ultimate Felicity : 'Tis too unhappily apparent That theſe Deſirable Ends have been and are very much obſtructed, whilſt Cuſtom, over much Curioſity, Prejudice of Education, or unreaſonable Partiality, incline Us to have a greater Eſteem for any Private Sentiments than the Subſtantial Parts of Chriſtianity, expreſs'd by Soundneſs of Faith, and Regularity of Life : And that the Common Bond of Universal Diffuſive and truly Chriſtian Charity, including a mutual Intercourſe of all other Religious Vertues, together with the general Duties of Humanity, is one of the Beſt Expedients to cure all thoſe unhappy Maladies ; to Eſtabliſh Peace and Truth in our Borders ; and conſequently reſtore the Ancient Beauty of that Pure Religion, ſo infinitely ſurpaſſing all other Enjoyments in the World,



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M O R A L I T Y.

**I**N the Highest and most strict Acceptation of the Word, *Morality* is the Summ of that Pure Original Righteousness instamp'd on the Human Nature; and imports no less than a Renovation of the Divine Image, or a Re-conformity thereunto, by reducing the Spiritual Faculties to their Primitive Rectitude, and a due Exercise on their proper Objects. This was the Perfect and Unchangeable Law of Creation, adapted only to the Nature of Rational Beings, and Eternally Obliging to every Individual. As among These, the Omnipotent Creator establish'd an inseparable Connexion between Duty and Happiness: So, they  
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being furnish'd with those Supreme Faculties the Understanding and Will, and these equally mov'd by a Natural Propension, were truly capable of persevering in Both, to the utmost Extent of Measure and Duration.

THIS consummate Pitch of Moral Righteousness, which the whole Stock of Mankind had absolutely lost in their First Representative, must be indeed acknowledg'd as inconsistent with the present Degeneracy of their Intellectual Faculties: Yet, notwithstanding such Deplorable Deviation from that Holy and Equitable Rule of Obedience, Originally imprinted on the Mind; and the infinite Condescension of Divine Wisdom and Grace in making up that vast Deficiency and inconceivable Loss with the highest Advantage; the same Moral Obligations remain indispensably annex'd to those Glorious Benefits of Redemption; and are so Essential a Part of that Holy Obedience enjoyn'd under the Bright Dispensation of the Blessed Gospel, that without a sincere Pursuit of the One, in real Desires and Practical Endeavours, no  
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just Claim can be made to the inestimable Privileges of the Other.

BUT this Fundamental Principle of Natural Religion, or Moral Rectitude of the Soul and its subordinate Faculties, which our Blessed Savior came not to Destroy but to recover and Fulfill, as a necessary Help to, or rather a Part of, Spiritual Worship, having been already suggested in the preceding Chapters ; I shall now chiefly insist on the Larger and more Vulgar Acceptation of *Morality*, as it refers to the Orderly Government of the Outward Conversation : Which, in Summ, may amount to thus much, viz.

“ *A Just Faith and Amicable De-*  
“ *portment towards all Mankind,*  
“ *through the whole Course of our*  
“ *Lives ; Respecting the Various*  
“ *Kinds of Commerce and Neigh-*  
“ *bour-like Offices ; together with*  
“ *a Temperate Use of Lawful En-*  
“ *joyments.*

THERE is an admirable Harmony attending the several Dispensations of  
God

God to Mankind, in order to their Present and Future Happiness ; whether in the Lowest Degree , by the Light and Laws of Nature ; or further by the Superaddition of the Written Precepts both Moral and Ceremonial ; or Lastly by the Brighter Discoveries of the Holy Gospel : All which are so happily link'd together, that like remote Lines in the Circumference, they manifestly point at the same Center, *i. e.* A Restauration of that Pure Heavenly Image which Sin had altogether Defac'd. As the Two *Tables* given to *Israel* on Mount *Sinai*, by the extraordinary Condescension and Singular Favour of the Almighty, for a Perfect Rule and Standard of their Obedience, were never to be divided ; but the Precepts of the Second, relating to Man, as our Neighbor, to be Observ'd with the same Uprightness and Alacrity as those of the First towards God : So Christianity does not only discover, in the truest Light, the Sublime Nature, Excellency and Spirituality of Divine Adoration, as the peculiar Duty of Intelligent Beings, and inspire us with  
 suita-

suitable Affections for a becoming Engagement therein; but also in a special manner leads to the Perfection of Moral Righteousness, so far as is consistent with the present Frailty of Human Nature. And whilst we willingly deviate from, act contrary to, or endeavour to subvert the Latter, our Pretences to the Former are deceitful, Erroneous and inconsistent.

AND indeed without Recourse to the clearer Testimony of Sacred Writ, The Foundations of *Law* and *Justice* (as \**Cicero* well observes) are so inseparably fix'd in Human Nature by the Supreme Being; and so clearly manifested in real Distinctions between Good and Evil, as a Part of that true Reason and Divine Knowledg Originally instamp'd on Man's Constitution, that they never yet could be wholly eras'd by so long Tract of Time, or the most Powerful Habits of Vice and Impiety. And elsewhere He tells us,  
 " † That Natural Reason, which is a  
 " Divine as well as Human Law, if  
 " it be rightly obey'd, will not suffer  
 " us to covet Another's Property, nor  
 " in-

\* *Cic. de Legib. l. 1.*

† *Id. de Offic. l. 3.*



\* Plato de  
Leg. l. 2.

“ increase our own Fortune by invading our Neighbor’s. “ \* Plato  
“ esteem’d above all other En-  
“ joyments such a right Temper  
“ and Disposition of Mind as en-  
“ gages Men in the steady Practice  
“ of Universal Justice and Equity.”

† Pythag.  
aur. Carm.

And *Pythagoras* among his other Excellent Precepts, which carry a Lustre somewhat more than Human, strictly requires that “ † Justice be the Gover-  
“ ning Principle in all our Words and  
“ Actions.”

PLAINNESS and Integrity of Heart are Essential Ingredients to the true Dignity of Intellectual Beings, and the Performance of all Vertuous or Laudable Actions. They are the Grand Support of Temporal Happiness, and the very Life of Orderly Conversation. Without them we incur the most Sordid Degeneracy that Reasonable Nature is capable of; and are really no better than Painted Pageants, set off with an Artificial Varnish, yet at the same Time wanting Life and Soul, and every Thing that truly bespeaks an intrinsic Worth.  
Hence

Hence that Kind of Deceit which is cunningly laid and smoothly carried on under a Disguise of Friendship, is very deservedly esteem'd the most impious and Detestable by every Generous Mind : And, as 'tis infinitely more Dangerous than open Robbery, in as much as the injur'd Person, seeing no Ground of Suspicion, has neither Opportunity at First to stand on his Guard, nor afterwards, for want of the usual Proofs in other Sorts of Fraud, to seek his Redress by Law : So, without adequate Repentance and Reparation, 'twill probably make the worst Figure in that Dismal Catalogue treasur'd up in the Aggressor's Breast, when the Supreme Judge shall impartially examine and pass a Righteous Sentence upon all our Actions. 'Tis therefore

very Excellent Advice of \* *Seneca*, \* *Sen. Ep. ad Luc. 83.*  
 " That we should so strictly manage

" our whole Deportment, as if our most  
 " secret Behaviour were always expos'd to open View ; and so Regulate our Thoughts, as if the World  
 " could penetrate the very inmost Re-  
 " cesses of our Minds." And indeed  
 if a Consciencious Observance of all  
 Moral

Moral Duties, be both an indelible Principle in Natural Religion, Radically impress'd on the Soul of Man ; if this be also an Essential Part of the *Christian* ; and thereby so strongly enforc'd as to extend to the most secret Springs of all Overt Acts, not leaving so much as the least Room for any Kind of Fraudulent Intentions : Then Such as are steady in nothing but Inconstancy ; who can shift oftner than the Wind, and, like *Proteus*, put on every Shape to Deceive ; whose only Governing Principle is Private Interest, back'd with all the Sordid Means of attaining it ; who can boldly cancel the Authority and Obligations of the Moral Law, both Natural and Reveal'd ; tho' in it self as unalterable as that Supreme Being by whom 'twas enjoin'd ; may truly claim nearest Affinity to the Grand *Deceiver*, but can with no Colour of Reason make any Pretensions to the Honourable Title, either of *Christians* or *Men*.

EQUITY and Justice are those strong Pillars whereby the whole lower Creation is upheld ; which otherwise  
would

would soon relapse into its Original *Chaos* of Disorder and Confusion. 'Tis a Principle of Honour interwoven with the very Essence or First Constitution of Rational Beings, as no small Part of that high Preeminence which they Rightfully claim over all the Sensitive Creatures: And, tho' never so much obscur'd in the Fallen State of Nature, it's the indispensable Duty of every individual Person to Retrieve, cherish and improve it: Being so necessary a Qualification, both in an Human and Christian Respect, that the Want of it is sufficient to over-balance all other seeming Vertues, and as if they were Eternally cancell'd, has an irrefragable Influence on the Determination of a Final Reward. Thus the Almighty and Supreme Being, who is held by no other Laws than the Rectitude of his own Glorious Attributes, condescends so low as to make the most solemn Appeal concerning the Equity of his Judgments and Dispensations to Men, *Ezek.* 18. 25, 29, 30.

BUT beside the strict Rules of immaculate Justice, we are further oblig'd



blig'd to imitate, as far as possible, the Divine Goodness and Perfections, in all Acts of Kindness, Compassion and Beneficence; which are the necessary and diffusive Springs of Reciprocal Happiness among Reasonable Creatures; either respecting the Greater OEconomies of Kingdoms, States and Civil Societies; or the Lesser, of particular Families, together with the mutual Intercourse of all Neighbour-like Offices. Not to repeat what has been already hinted, as the Dictates of Christianity on this Behalf: We are taught by the *Moral Philosophers*, and particularly *Cicero*, “ \* To love all Others as our Selves: ” || “ That Men are Born for the Service of each Other: ” † “ That every Man is a Part of the whole Community; and, as He can have no Separate Interest, owes a Common Duty to the Publick Good: ” “ \* That Nature it self enjoyns Us to be truly Serviceable to as Many as we can: ” || “ That Nothing is Better, more Noble, or Excellent than Goodness and Beneficence: ” † And “ That tis Greater and more Honourable to

\* Cic. de

Leg. l. 1.

|| Id. de

Offic. l. 1.

† Id. Quæst.

Acad. l. 1.

\* Id. de Fi-

nib. l. 3.

|| Id. de

Nat. Deor.

l. 1.

† Id. de

Nat. Deor.

l. 2.

“ to do Good to all, than to excel  
“ in Riches, &c.

As to that Part of Moral Justice which every Man indispenfably owes to Himself; viz. The Habitual Exercise of general Vertue, Sobriety, Temperance, Chastity, Government of the Passions, Diligence in his particular Place and Station, &c. We are not only instructed by such clear and inevitable Divine Exhortations as carry the Force of Positive Commands, *To live Soberly, Righteously and Godly; To be Holy in all manner of Conversation; To cleanse our Selves from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit; To flee Youthful Lusts; To avoid Rioting and Drunkenness; To abstain from all Appearance of Evil; To Follow Peace with all Men; and keep our Selves unspotted from the World;* but strongly induc'd to the constant Practice of those Advantageous Vertues by the most sensible Motives of Interest as well as Duty: Whereas the contrary Vices, which Debase Human Nature to the lowest Degree, beside the frequent uneasy Thoughts of an After-  
I 2 reckoning,

reckoning, are usually accompanied with no small Degree of Punishment in this World. 'Tis the most Noble Proof of a Vertuous Mind, and argues an Excellent Proficiency in Goodness, when Men truly Love and Practise it for its own sake, as most suited to the Dignity of the Reasonable Soul, and infinitely preferable to the Sordid Pleasures of Vice; tho' no Future Rewards were annex'd to the One, or Punishments to the Other. Yet this is no more than we have from that Learned *Philosopher* and *Moralist*, so often mention'd. 'Twas his Opinion \* "That  
 " Virtue would be truly Desirable from  
 " its own intrinsic Worth, tho' no Profit or Advantage accrued to the Practice of it : " And " † That Vicious  
 " Habits are so great a Stain to Human Nature, and so truly Odious in  
 " Themselves, That every Person  
 " acted by Right Reason would avoid  
 " 'em, tho' He was sure they would  
 " be always conceal'd both from God  
 " and Men, and had no Future Punishment entail'd upon them." Pursuant to these Worthy Sentiments, He asserts, " || That One Day well  
 " spent,

\* Cic. de  
*Finib.* l. 2.  
 § 1. 3.

† Id. de  
*Offic.* l. 3.

|| Id. *Quæst.*  
*Tusc.* l. 5.

“ spent, according to the Precepts of  
 “ Virtue, is far more eligible than a  
 “ Vicious Immortality.” Nor was  
*Seneca* much inferior to Him, when  
 He tells us “ \* That Virtue is the  
 “ most Noble, Exalted, invincible and  
 “ indefatigable Habit ; whereas Sen-  
 “ sual Pleasure is Debasing, Servile,  
 “ Enfeebling, &c.” And Especially  
 when, in the highest Flights imagi-  
 nable, He affirms “ † That the Vir-  
 “ tue to which He himself aspir’d was  
 “ highly Honourable : Not simply as  
 “ it was untainted with Evil ; but  
 “ because it Relaxed the Mind, Dis-  
 “ pos’d it for the Knowledg of Hea-  
 “ venly Things, and made it meet  
 “ for Communion with God.” “ || *Py-*  
 “ *thagoras* forbids all Dishonest and  
 “ impure Actions, respecting Others  
 “ or our Selves.” And \* *Seneca*  
 “ would allow no Man to be truly  
 “ Great, unless He had a real † Pro-  
 “ pension to the Exercise of Virtue.

\* *Sen. de*  
*vit. beat.*  
*c. 7.*

† *Id. Nat.*  
*Quæst. l. i.*  
*Præfat.*

|| *Aur.*  
*Carm.*

\* *Sen. de*  
*Provid.*

† *Faculta-*  
*tem exhi-*  
*benda Vir-*  
*tutis.*

B U T the most compleat and admi-  
 rable Scheme of a Regular Life, is  
 laid down by *Phocylides*, One of the  
*Minor Poets*, in his Short but incom-  
 I 3 parable



\* Πρῶτα  
Θεὸν τί-  
μα— &c.

parable Ποῖημα Νουθετικόν. " He \* Ex-  
 " horts to an awful Reverence of  
 " God — : To speak Truth at all  
 " Times, and abhor Falshood — :  
 " To give all Men their Due, and be  
 " impartial in Judging ; otherwise  
 " God will judg Us hereafter — :  
 " Not to grow Rich by unjust Means ;  
 " but to live on what is truly our  
 " own — : To be content with our  
 " Present Condition, and not Encroach  
 " on the Property of Others — : To  
 " use Just Measures, and an Equal  
 " Balance — : To give the Labourer  
 " his Hire, and not oppress the  
 " Poor — : To let the Heart and  
 " Tongue always agree, and be true  
 " to our Trust — : To entertain the  
 " Stranger ; lead the Blind ; raise up  
 " Him that is Fallen ; succour the  
 " Helpless ; and, if Wealthy, relieve  
 " liberally the Wants of Others out  
 " of what the Divine Bounty has gi-  
 " ven. Afterwards He tells us " That  
 " the Earth affords no lasting Abode  
 " for Man — : That Covetousness is  
 " the Mother of all Mischief — :  
 " That we should not be puff'd up  
 " with Knowledg or Riches — : That  
 " there

“ there is One Wise God, Mighty and  
 “ perfectly Blessed. Then He advises  
 “ to Regulate the Passions ; Recom-  
 “ mends an Emulation of the Best  
 “ Examples, and Universal Tempe-  
 “ rance, joyn’d with Industrious Acti-  
 “ vity ; Disswades from Envyng the  
 “ Prosperity of Others ; alludes to  
 “ the Order, Harmony and mutual  
 “ Communication between the Sun,  
 “ Moon, Earth, Rivers, Sea, &c.  
 “ and further heightens his Argument  
 “ from the Dignity of the Soul, which  
 “ is the Image of God, Govern’d by  
 “ Him, Immortal, uncapable of De-  
 “ cay, and Susceptive of Heavenly  
 “ Bliss ; whereas the Body, being  
 “ Form’d of Earth, shall be resolv’d  
 “ into its Original Dust.” Many O-  
 ther Useful Instructions might have  
 been collected from that Excellent  
*Poem* ; which, in the whole, carries  
 so Noble a Strain of the Purest *Mora-*  
*lity*, that ’tis scarce to be equall’d a-  
 mong any of the Celebrated *Heathen-*  
*Writers* ; whose more Bulky Perfor-  
 mances, tho’ set off with very becom-  
 ing Arguments in the Recommendation  
 of Virtue and Goodness, were, for the

most Part, sullied by some Kind of Vicious Allay.

*EUSEBIUS*, speaking of Some that were most Exemplary for the Practice of Religion, Regularity of Life, and all Kinds of Substantial Goodness, before the Incarnation of our Blessed *Savior*, was of the Opinion “ That they were ἔργω, tho’ not ὀνόματι, *Christians* :” But it’s to be fear’d not a Few who now live so long after it, may be too truly rather styl’d Such ὀνόματι than ἔργω, in Name than in Practice. A Vertuous Habit of the Mind is so absolutely necessary to influence the whole Life, and Beautify every particular Action ; to over-balance or repel all the Gilded Charms of Avarice, Pride, and Self-interest, with the many secret Ways of Fraudulent Practice subservient thereto ; that a Man deservedly procures the Lasting Epithets of *Good* or *Bad*, as He appears either sway’d by, or Regardless of it. And indeed the Defect hereof is sufficient to tarnish the very Brightest of Other Laudable Endowments ; whilst we consider That to be a Good Christian,

stian, presupposes and inevitably includes all the Common Duties of Natural or Moral Justice.

THO' a large Stock of Serpentine Subtilty, varnish'd over with Plausible Pretensions, may be often highly serviceable to Men's Corrupt Temporal Advantage, and the Furtherance of their Sinister Designs; as also to screen them from any gross Public Censures, whilst but too really Deserv'd; 'twill nevertheless afford them but Melancholy Reflexions in all the Dreaded Intervals of Serious Thought: Whereas Every Person who has been truly govern'd by a Sense of Honour, Religion and Vertue; through his whole Conduct, both in Respect of Principles and Ends, can always with a Pleasing Serenity make that Solemn Appeal of the Blessed *Apostle*, either to Divine Omniscience or the Censorious World, *That with Simplicity and Pious Sincerity his whole Conversation has been Regulated and Determin'd.* 'Tis of the most Dangerous Consequence to stifle or reject with Indignity, the many Seasonable *Memento's* of that Faithful



ful *Monitor* lodg'd in our Bosoms ; which He now gives us, for the most Part, in the Softest Accents of an intimate Friend ; Since He will not fail to Treasure them up for a much harsher Address, especially in that general Assault of a Future Reckoning : And then his Voice will be Terrible, like a Mighty Peal of Thunder, and all the Poyson'd Arrows of a Full Quiver discharg'd in his own Vindication, How Many, by a Foolish Dalliance with some of the most Diminutive Vices, which at First View seem'd unworthy of Scruple, have given Ground to their Subtil Adversary, till they came at last to swallow his Groffer Baits undiscern'd ; to the great Hazard both of their Present Peace, and Future Happiness !

Y E T Nothing is more common than to make an Estimate of Persons and Things according to the Deceitful View of a present Temporal Interest. Hence 'tis that Such Men as have but an uncommon Degree of Natural Sharpness to over-reach Others of less Policy and Design, or enrich them

themselves by innumerable Shifts and  
 little Artifices, too refin'd for the  
 Penalties of the *Law*; are usually  
 counted Brave Fellows, of Admira-  
 ble Parts, and fit to Live any where :  
 As if that Old \* *Heathen* Precept, *Quod Ti-*  
 implanted in Human Nature, and *bi non vis*  
 most solemnly enforc'd by our Great *fieri, &c.*  
*Lawgiver* [ *sc. To Do the same to O-*  
*thers, which we would have done to*  
*our Selves* ] had been long ago Repeal'd,  
 The most Loose and Profligate Person,  
 who bids open Defiance to the Dictates  
 of Reason and Moral Vertue, would  
 be ready to think it a very harsh and  
 injurious Impeachment of his Honour,  
 if any should presume to call in Que-  
 stion his Christianity; as also the For-  
 mal Hypocrite, who amidst all his  
 Fine Flourishes, makes no Scruple to  
 live in a daily Commission of some  
 Darling Impiety : And indeed the  
 frequent Inhibitions of our Blessed  
*Savior*, to whom all Judgment is re-  
 ferr'd, leave not the least Room for  
 such Cenforiousness : Yet too too  
 Many, who bear that most valuable  
 Title, seem very often to forget that  
 they are Men; whilst Pride, Cove-  
 tousness,

tousness, Ambition, or other Sordid Aims, engage them in mean and unbecoming Actions; blind that Noble Intellect which should distinguish them from Irrational Creatures; and, like a Resistless Torrent, wash away all Apprehensions both of Honour and Duty.

THE *Negative* Part of Moral Justice requires That we wrong not any One willingly in the least Degree, whether in his Person, Estate, Interest, or Reputation: That we take no Advantage of another's Ignorance, Weakness, or Indigence, by subtil Insinuations or pretended Kindness, much less by Lying or Equivocation: That we Covet not our Neighbor's Property, neither prostitute Honour or Conscience by entertaining so much as Fraudulent Thoughts in any Kind of Commerce, tho' upon never so great Prospect of Temporal Interest: And That we shew no Vicious Examples in our Selves, nor encourage them in Others, whereby Religion, Vertue or Good Manners may be either Scandaliz'd, or receive any Degree of Detriment in their just Authority and Esteem. The  
Po-

*Positive* Part requires Faithfulness to our Word and Promises ; as Sacred Obligations, and altogether beyond the Reach of any Dispensing Power : An open Sincere and undisguis'd Deportment in our whole Conversation ; more especially in all Matters of Traffic and mutual Negotiation, which have Respect to the Public Good : An hearty Readiness to perform all Civil or Public Duties incident to our Respective Stations, together with the more Private good Offices of Neighbourly Kindness and Beneficence : A Delightful Care to preserve and heighten the Ties of Special Friendship ; and a Compassionate Benignity towards all Mankind : Ample Restitution in Case of any known Injuries : Frequent Revolving in our Thoughts the inviolable Principles of Justice, both Natural and Reveal'd ; and a steady Adherence to them as the Guide of our Life and Actions.

I N those Early Annals of Time, when Righteous *Seth*, with his Civiliz'd Offspring, had introduc'd the Awful Practice of Religion, which before



fore was so long Buried under the Ruins of that First Apostacy, the pure Primitive Laws of Reason, Equity and Beneficence implanted in Human Nature, tho' very much obscur'd, began to shine forth again in some Degree of their inimitable Beauty; and chas'd away the Former Clouds of Confusion, Rapine and Violence. Under his Gentle and Wel-order'd Government, *Law* was happily brought into Precept and Practice; Pure Religion retriev'd and encourag'd; Property secur'd; and Men in all Respects conformable to the Dictates of Reason and Vertue. But, after his Death, who had been held in so Great Veneration, all that Good Order which He had settled in the World, became gradually invert-ed; and at last swallow'd up in such an absolute Defection from the Principles of Piety and Justice, that not the least Footsteps of 'em remain'd: Which issued in the Extirpation of that most Nefarious Race of Mankind. Afterwards in the Just Reign of *Noah*, Religion, Vertue and Equity, with all the happy Concomitants, appear'd again in their Ancient Lustre: And as  
He

He Govern'd the New-born World  
with Justice, Mildness and Integrity ;  
so they were not wanting in agreeable  
Returns of Homage and Obedience,  
without Disorder or Tumult ; enjoying  
their Respective Rights in the most  
settled Peace, Plenty and Security.  
But when Avarice, Ambition, and  
Thirst of Arbitrary Power Display'd  
themselves in the Aspiring Conduct of  
*Nimrod* ; they soon usher'd in Confu-  
sion, Usurpation and all Kinds of Ho-  
stile Violence, with the Loss of For-  
mer Liberty, and a precarious En-  
joyment of all Common Rights. And  
as these are Emphatical Types both of  
the most Laudable and Arbitrary Ad-  
ministrations of Government ever  
since : So they are in a special Man-  
ner applicable to the Different Tem-  
pers of every individual Person, down  
to the lowest Rank. For, so far as  
any Man is not govern'd or influenc'd  
by a Principle of Kindness, Humanity  
and Faithfulness, at least of Honour,  
Vertue and Equity, in all his Actions  
and Designs, He will not scruple to  
take all Opportunities of Encroaching  
on the Properties of Others ; and is  
really

really no Better than the very Worst of Tyrants in his Measure and Capacity.

IT must therefore be acknowledg'd, or will certainly at last be found, in Opposition to the Current of a very Licentious and Dissolute Age, That Sincerity of Heart and Integrity of Life are the Great and indispensable Ornaments of Human Nature ; by which 'tis rais'd in no small Degree from the Old Rubbish of its Fallen State, Cultivated, Polish'd and advanc'd towards its Central Happiness and Blessed Origin, the Divine Being. Hereby the Public Peace, Order and Harmony of the World, next to the admirable Care of a Supreme Providence, are Eminently sustain'd ; and without these Ennobling Qualifications, all Human Acts, whether Civil or Religious, appear not only Vain, insipid and Deceitful, but altogether unbecoming Rational Creatures. In Summ ; 'tis what Nature it self teaches, and carefully provides for, as well by her Universal Laws as the Municipal of each Civil Constitution ; the Special Dictates of Heaven, in those

those standing Tables of the *Mosaic* Dispensation, strictly enjoyn ; and Christianity, in the whole Scope of its inestimable Precepts, above all enforces with the Brightest Illustration and Authority : So that if all Persons did but truly endeavour to square their Lives according to those Excellent Rules ; there would be no Oppression, Injustice or Violence ; no Kinds of Fraud, Treachery or Dissimulation ; no Animosities, Divisions or Contentions in the World.

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A T H E I S M.

**T**HAT such a Monstrous Deformity as Speculative *Atheism*, an Opinion so inconsistent in it self, so grossly impious and absurd That it can have no Solid Foundation in Nature, being a manifest Violence to the Dictates of Reason, and an open Hostility against the Divine Omnipotence, should not only be named, but in any Degree found among Those that have not quitted all Pretensions to the Title of Rational Creatures; is indeed most highly astonishing: And That any of Those who have been early Season'd with a Firm Belief of the Supreme Being, and his incomprehensible Attributes, Gloriously display'd through

the Blessed *Medium* of Reconciliation, should not only dare to trample on, despise, or neglect those Righteous Laws and Holy Rules of Practical Obedience which He has enjoyn'd them, but in some Respects outvie the Former in such Dissolute Courses as are Diametrically opposite to their acknowledg'd Principles; is altogether as irreconcilable to Reason, and equally Dangerous in the Event. From what has been already urg'd in the preceding Chapters, it evidently appears That neither the want of Knowing Better, nor of suitable Means for improving that Knowledge, can ever be pleaded by any individual Person as an Excuse for either of these Tremendous Instances of the most unaccountable Folly: Whilst the Former Sort are so wilfully Stupid as to reject the Authority, and the Latter the most Effectual Aids of Divine Revelation; and Both alike, by a pernicious Agreement, wholly bear down those Remains of Natural Religion implanted in the Heart.

YET this Unhappy Conquest is very seldom so compleat, but that the  
smo-

smother'd Sparks of that *ἑμφύλιον πῦρ*,  
 or Divine Impress on the Reasonable  
 Soul, will be often endeavouring to  
 break forth, and shew the Obstinate  
 Wanderer his wretched Mistake; what  
 Omnipotent Goodness He spurns a-  
 gainst; and what will be the Dread-  
 ful Issue without a Timely Retreat:  
 So that to make up a Confirm'd *Atheist*,  
 there must be a continued *Series* of the  
 most resolute Opposition to all Specu-  
 lative Knowledg, Sound Reason, Con-  
 science, Consideration, and all Degrees  
 of Moral Vertue, with whatsoever else  
 illustrates the true Dignity of Human  
 Nature. Therefore *Plato* was of O-  
 pinion "That no Man ever persisted  
 "Disowning a Deity, from his first  
 "Maturity of Thought to Old Age."

*Plato de  
 Legib. l.  
 10.*

THE Acknowledgment of One Su-  
 preme, Eternal, Self-Existent, per-  
 fectly Wise and Glorious Being, as the  
 Omnipotent Creator, Gracious Preser-  
 ver, Sovereign Ruler, First Cause, and  
 Ultimate End of all Things; with  
 the necessary Consequence of such  
 Moral Duties as are peculiar to Rea-  
 sonable Creatures, *viz.* Humility, De-  
 pendance,



pendance, Awful Fear, Praise, Adoration, &c. is so far from being the special Product of Later Times, tho' eminently heighten'd by the Bright Discoveries of the Gospel-Dispensation, that 'tis the First or Fundamental Lesson of Nature, whenscever it begins to make any true Step towards its Recovery ; and bears almost even Date with the World it self : Neither was it ever confin'd to any particular Nation ; but has been in some Degree, in all Ages, diffus'd through every Part of the World : As the most Faithful Historians and accurate Travellers of unsuspected Integrity, have unanimously aver'd. None of them could ever yet in the Remotest Countries out-travel the Notion of a Deity ; nor the Exercise of some Kind of Worship, Sacrifice, &c. as the Result thereof. Indeed among the most Savage and unpolish'd People, those Apprehensions have been less clear, and accompanied with some wild Extravagancies in their imaginary Devotion : But among the more Civiliz'd, inquisitive and Thinking Part of Mankind, tho' unacquainted with the Extraordinary Blessing of Divine

vine

vine Revelation, there has not been wanting Some in all Ages who have given very full and Exemplary Proof of that Great Essential Principle in Natural Religion. What therefore appears so Radically implanted in Nature it self, and can so justly plead the earliest Antiquity, the most uninterrupted Descent, and the most Universal Suffrage of Mankind; ought with the greatest Reason to be acknowledged as a certain Fundamental and uncontrovertible Truth: Since there can be no more powerfully convincing Evidence of a Deity, antecedent to all Created Beings, than that which is so legibly written in every Man's Heart.

BUT not to insist peremptorily on what *Plato* with good Reason thought probable, *i. e.* That all Mankind sooner or later have some sensible and satisfactory Apprehensions of a Divine Being: And supposing that there may have been, or yet be, Some few Exceptions from that General Rule; Some Men so egregiously harden'd in their Stupidity, as never to have had any Discernible Impressions of Conscience,

or Awful Belief of a Deity throughout the whole Course of their Lives: Yet this preternatural Stupor would no more be a Reasonable Proof That Conscience is not a general Divine Gift, and Substantial Witness of a Supreme Being, implanted in Human Nature; than either the congenite Want of Reason in Idiots, or the prodigious Sottishness or Distracting Frenzy which accidentally destroys that Noble Qualification in Some Others, can be a fair Argument to prove that Reason is not a Common or General Principle in Men. 'Tis on very good Grounds therefore that the Holy *Psalmist* pronounces that Man a *Fool*, i. e. Defective or Distemper'd in his Reason, who *says in his Heart*, or entertains the least Imagination That *there is no God*: And the Learned *Trismegistus* Defines *Atheism* to be "The highest or most Fatal Distemper of the Reasonable Soul.

If there be any Persons then, who yet retain in other Things the Exercise of Reason, and can be so thoroughly harden'd as to sink down into this  
Abyss

Abyſs of Impiety (For a long confirm'd and unſhaken Degree of Speculative Atheiſm is almoſt incredible) they herein out-brave the Rebellious Wickedneſs of the Infernal Spirits; who in their moſt avow'd Enmity to the Sovereign Will and Glorious Deſigns of God, were never able to reach that moſt inconfiſtent and horrible Pitch of Madneſs to Diſown his Being; but, on the contrary, Tremble at the inevitable Belief of it. For tho' Hell is generally acknowledg'd both as the Fountain and Receptacle of all Wickedneſs; yet ſo Great a Monster as Speculative Atheiſm never was or will be found there. How amazingly horrible then is it That any Thing of this Nature ſhould appear on Earth; and eſpecially in thoſe Parts of it which have been eminently Favour'd with the Meridian Light of Divine Revelation! That Such as have not only the Honour to be rank'd among Human Creatures, but the moſt ſolemn Invitations and Encouragement, together with the moſt Efficacious Means, for cultivating and improving both the higheſt and moſt intimate Alliance with Heaven

it

it self, can arrive at this more than Devilish Height of Infatuation, *viz.* To think it a Fine Improvement in Wit, Learning and Reason when they can form any strain'd Arguments for exploding the Belief of a Deity ; Or a true Piece of Gallantry and Greatness of Mind, to Live above the Fear thereof!

W O U L D Men but allow Them- to argue fairly, according to the proper Dictates of Reason and Philosophy, from the Effects to the Cause ; that admirable Beauty, Order and Connexion which so evidently appears between all the constituent Parts of Creation and Providence, would necessarily direct them to ascend, as by a sure *Climax*, to an Awful Acknowledgment of the Supreme Being ; and become more than a Mathematical Proof to those of the most curious, tho' severe, Speculations. To instance in a very Few. Can any Man indulge so much as an Atheistical Thought, who duly considers the incomparable Suspension of this vast Globe of Earth for so many Thousand Years, whilst envi-  
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ron'd with Waters ; the continu'd Flux and Reflux of the Sea, so carefully circumscrib'd and Regulated by its own peculiar Laws ; the constant Motions and happy Influence of the Sun and Moon, with all the Inferior Luminaries, in their excellent Order and Beauty ; the Alternations of Day and Night, and of the Annual Seasons ; the Elastic Quality of the Air, and its necessary Purgation by Thunder, Lightning and Winds ; the Propagation of Animal and Vegetative Creatures in their distinct *Species* ; the evident Marks of Divine Authority in the best Forms of Human Government, both Religious and Civil ; the admirable Structure of our Bodies, in the exact Symmetry and mutual Good Offices of their numerous Parts ; the happy Temperament and concurring Benefits of the various Fluids ; the Orderly Distribution and impulsive Energy of the most exquisitely Fine and imperceptible Spirits ; and all happily contributing to Feed and cherish the tender Lamp of Life ? But especially if He duely ponders the more Sublime and Capacious Part of Man, which bears the

the nearest Resemblance of his Almighty Creator : From the Immensity of its Thoughts ; the boundless Extent of its Desires ; the Vastness of its Capacity, in Thinking, Contriving, Examining, Considering, Arguing, Disputing, Comprehending what is past, present and to come, Forming *Idea's* of invisible Things, and reaching after more adequate Objects than the whole Creation affords ; What Inference can be so clear and Genuine, as That there is One, only Perfect, most Glorious, and Infinite Being, the immense Fountain of Life, Wisdom, Power and Goodness, who is every Way sufficient to fill and satisfy its most enlarged Desires ? For if Man be really endued with a Natural Capacity of Desiring and Enjoying a Greater Good than what is merely suited to his Corporeal or Sensitive Part ; 'tis highly Reasonable to conclude both That there is such a Supreme Good, and That this Desirable Object, so adequate to the Intellectual Faculties, is attainable : Otherwise there would be a Kind of Vacuity or Defect in the consummate Works of Creation.

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To what End should the Soul bring with it those innate Impressions of a Deity into the World? Or why should it at any Time, when freest from the Clogs of Flesh, exert it self in the most evident Divine Inclinations, in strong and sensible Propensions, or Pious Aspirations towards an Unseen Felicity; if there were no Reserve of Endless *Pleasures or Fulness of Joy* in the Glorious Presence and *at the Right Hand* of Him who is the Unchangeable Author of its Being? To what Purpose should it derive its Origin from an immediate Divine Inspiration; and not out of the same Sensitive Spirits which form'd the Animal Souls of Beasts, Fowles, Fishes, &c. if, like theirs, 'twere only design'd to actuate the Sluggish Organs for a very short Time, and then return to Corruption? And why should it be rais'd to a Sublimer Pitch, by the most powerfully affecting and insuperable Impressions of Immortality (of which we have innumerable Testimonies in the Writings of Moral Philosophers): Or what Advantage could accrue from its surviving

ving the corruptible Body ; if there were not an Eternal Being, whose immense Perfections and communicable Attributes are abundantly suited to the utmost Extent of its Desires and Capacity ? Of what Use could those ingenerate Notions of Good and Evil, of Vertue and Vice, of Rewards and Punishments, which are inseparable from a Rational Soul (as is evident in many of the uncultivated *Heathens*) be reasonably thought : Or how should we reconcile the different Dispensations of Providence in this World ; if there were not a Supreme Tribunal, and an Infallible Omnipotent Judge, who will most certainly pass a Righteous Sentence on all Persons and Actions ? In the Darkness of *Gentilism*, we find some obscure Conceptions of this Nature. They had their Notions of an *Elysium*, or State of Blessedness ; Of *Pluto*, *Minos*, *Rhadamanthus*, *Proserpine*, the *Furiæ*, *Cerberus*, &c. [The Dispensers and Executioners of Infernal Justice] together with particular Examples, as *Sisyphus*, *Ixion*, *Tantalus*, &c. That Justice, Benignity, Temperance and all Kinds of Moral Ver-

Vertue appear infinitely more amiable than Dishonest, Sordid or Vicious Practices, to every unbiass'd Mind, when Reason has resum'd its proper Sovereignty over the Disorder'd Passions; is no mean Argument That the Soul is of Heavenly Extract, and not only deriv'd its Being from an inexhaustible Fountain of Goodness, but still retains some indelible Characters of its Blessed Original. But nothing in Nature can be so absurd, so inconsistent with Reason, and repugnant to the Universal Acknowledgments of Mankind, as those sorry and Ridiculous Conceptions of Modern *Atheists*, of a Mechanic Soul; either wholly consisting of, or actuated by, Matter and Motion. Before such wretched Stuff can go down with 'em, they must forcibly stifle the Dictates of Nature; which, if fairly trac'd, would teach them much Nobler Sentiments: According to that Assertion of *Theodoret* \* "That Men are first taught Divinity by the Light of Nature; and then 'tis Rectified, heighten'd and confirm'd to them by the Holy Scriptures.

\* *Tom. 2.  
lib. de An-  
gelis. pag.  
498.*

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WILL any be so extreamly Sceptical as to Doubt of every Thing, or at best Believe Nothing but what they have a clear Evidence of from their Exterior Senses? Then they have no such Proof of those more Noble Immaterial Beings which they bear about them: Yet 'twould be highly unreasonable and Disingenuous, from such a Caprichio, to Deny their Existence; which is so unquestionably apparent from those peculiar Operations which they continually exert. Or if some Few should be so grossly harden'd as to stagger at the Belief of these also (any further than their Whimsical Mechanic Invention) tho' so evidently Beautified with a Ray of the Divine Likeness: To what lower Principle can they, with any colour of Reason, ascribe their inseparable Properties, the Understanding, Will, Affections, Memory, Conscience, &c. which can so easily Ruminare, Recollect, choose, refuse, traverse the whole World in a Moment, and awfully reprove the most secret Irregularities, tho' impenetrable by any but the

the Omniscient Eye of Heaven? Natural Philosophy affords us many Useful Discoveries by way of Necessary Consequence ; which we nevertheless esteem equally certain with those that admit of the clearest Ocular Demonstration. The Circular Motion of the Blood, by a strong continued Expulsion from the Left Ventricle of the Heart into the Great and Lesser Arteries, till return'd by the Smaller Veins into the Greater, and at last immediately pour'd from the *Vena Cava* into the Right Ventricle ; is, from the most clear and invincible Arguments, establish'd as a Fundamental and unalterable Principle in the System of Anatomy, and no less certain than the clearest Proposition in *Euclid* ; notwithstanding the late Attempt of a conceited Author, without any Solid Reason or Argument, to impugn it. The Volatile Nitre of the Air, which is the Necessary *Medium* of Life and Sounds, is imperceptible by the most curious Inspection we can make : And yet we have such clear and undeniable Proofs of its Reality, Usefulness, or rather absolute Necessity, as leave not

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the least Room for Doubting. In the Metaphysical, or more sublime, Part of Philosophy, Men are content to search out Causes from their Effects: And more especially ought they to do so in their Enquiries into this First Principle of Nature, the Being of God (which every Flower, Herb or Spire of Grass do so strongly suggest) tho' there had been no clearer Conduct of Divine Revelation to enforce and explain it.

A M O N G the many Remote Causes which may be assign'd for this Extravagant, and too often incurable, Frenzy of the Soul, These seem to be the most Obvious, *viz.*

I. *Indulging the innate Pride of the Heart.* This Deadly Poyson, deriv'd from the Old Serpent, which caus'd the First Separation of Man from the Divine Presence and Favour, has always been the greatest Obstacle to his Recovery. Hereby Men are most easily brought to forget Themselves, and consequently the Glorious Author of their Being, and the Fountain of  
their

their Benefits, which is a very Dangerous Step towards Denying Him.

II. *Having too low Thoughts of Moral Vertue and Goodness.* This also has been One of the Master-pieces of Satanical Policy (which consists chiefly in Extreame) to Darken the genuine Lustre and Beauty of Religion, and thereby expose it the more easily to Contempt: As if to be Orthodox in mere empty Notions, would atone for the greatest Latitude in Immortality; and be allow'd as a sure Test of Evangelic Obedience, whilst the Mind and Conscience are defil'd by *holding the Truth in Unrighteousness.*

III. *Overvaluing the Strength and Conduct of Reason;* as a sufficient Guide in Divine as well as Temporal Matters. How Useful soever this may be in Other Speculations, the most Sublime and Essential Doctrins of Christianity, lying so far above its Reach, have usually in all Times and Places receiv'd the severest Treatment and Opposition therefrom; and so much the more as Men have been, in this



Respect, eminently Qualified. That the Death of Christ, for and on the Behalf of Others, should be the only Gate of Immortality ; the Cross, the true Way to an incorruptible Crown ; the Divine Nature become Incarnate ; and Justification alone obtain'd through the Righteousness and Merits of a Redeemer ; are Points that surpass all Metaphysical Solution, and would never yet go down with the Wisdom of this World. Hence too too many, whilst pretending to the most Refin'd Reason, have audaciously undermin'd the Authority of the Holy Scriptures, till they came to question, and at last wholly disown the Spirituality or Eternity of the Soul, and all sound Apprehensions of the Divine Being.

IV. *An affected Scepticism* ; arising from the Diversity of Opinions about Religion. 'Tis not improbable that Some Men, of very Superficial Thoughts but Deep Prejudice, when they observe the great Variety of Judgments, unhappy Contests, and uncharitable Reflections on account of the less Substantial Parts of Religion, may be thence induc'd



induc'd to Question whether there be any such Thing in Reality ; and so, from Doubting ( as all Apostasie is Gradual ) of what carries the clearest Proof to an unprejudic'd Mind, become wholly unable to settle in any Opinion ; till at last, unwarily falling in with the worst Examples, they sink down into a Profess'd Infidelity.

V. *The general Decay of Serious or Practical Piety.* To Observe how little Substantial Goodness and awful Sense of Religion, how little Regard to the Name, Honour and Laws of God, are to be found among a very great Part of Mankind, in the whole Course of their outward Conversation, notwithstanding their general Claim to the Common Privileges of Christianity ; is not only very Deplorable in it self, but with Such as are of a Captious Disposition, and not really possess'd with Sincere Aims and Desires to promote it in Practice, may be and too often is unhappily improv'd, by the Grand Deceiver, to the extraordinary Detriment of Religion and Propagation of Atheism. And this single

Consideration should be a very Powerful Motive to Ornamental Piety with all that are truly Serious in what they Profess.

VI. *Hypocrisy* ; or making a Fair Shew of External Religion, from Mean, Sinister and Worldly Ends. It must be indeed acknowledg'd That Nothing is more inconsistent with Right Reason, and the Dignity of Human Nature, than to cover Dissimulation with an Artificial Disguise ; especially in Matters of the highest importance. Neither does any Thing reflect a greater Scandal on the Strait Ways of Religion and Vertue, or more directly tend to confirm its avow'd Adversaries in their Damning Infidelity and Opposition, than such unhappy Instances of Pious Deceit. Yet, as these are very rare, in Comparison with Others who appear truly govern'd by Nobler Principles ; so they are very far from extenuating the Guilt of Such as grasp at all Opportunities to Defame the most Sacred Things.

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VII. *The Orderly Course and Efficacy of Second Causes:* As there are Some Venemous Insects which will turn all the wholsom Moisture that they draw from the most Delicious Flowers, to the heightening of their own Natural Virulence: So these visible Footsteps of infinite Wisdom, which to a Mind rightly dispos'd are no finall Helps to raise it into a Contemplative Admiration of the First Mover, who directs, influences or supersedes all inferior Causes, both Natural and Voluntary, to answer the Great Designs of his Providence; are sometimes, to Men of a perverse Judgment and Will, through Diabolical Suggestion, made Arguments to evade a Religious Acknowledgment of his incomprehensible Being and Attributes.

VIII. *The Unequal Distributions of Providence in this World;* respecting the Rewards of Vertue, and Punishment of Vice. 'Tis indeed very strange That this, which to a Pious Considerer bears a quite contrary Turn, and

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strongly suggests the Belief of a Deity and Righteous Judgment to come, should in any wise admit of an Atheistical Interpretation. Yet so it has been : and some of the few Instances we have of Speculative Atheism in Ancient History, arose from such unreasonable Offence taken at the seeming Inequality or Delay of Vindictive Providence. But if Men can't see Divine Justice, Goodness or Wisdom in these obscure Dispensations ; is not a general Belief of those inseparable Perfections, and the insufficiency of Human Wisdom to comprehend their untraceable Depth , infinitely more becoming than to conclude with an infatuating Rashness That there is no Supreme Governour of the World ? Very Excellent Reasons might be assign'd for the Delay of Punishment to Wicked Men, and the Temporary Afflictions of the Righteous, highly consistent with those Glorious Attributes which we acknowledg : But a compleat Solution of these *δυσωήτα* of Divine Providence , is reserv'd for the unshaded Light of the Other World. *Juvenal* observ'd Some in his Time that



## Of Atheism.

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that \**“ ascrib’d all Events to Fortune ;  
 “ and thought there was no Superior  
 “ Providence presided over the Ordinary Course of Nature.”* And ’twere to be heartily wish’d That this Old *Heathenish* Doctrin did not suit the Taste of many Moderns. But *Pythagoras*, as represented by *Jamblicus*, was far more Orthodox ; having learn’d  
 “ † That all Things are Order’d and  
 “ Dispens’d from above ; and however  
 “ they may seem to Us, do really proceed from the Beneficence and unerring Conduct of the Supreme Being.” Herein also *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Epictetus*, *Plutarch*, *Cicero*, *Seneca*, and the rest of the Grave Moral Philosophers, unanimously agreed.

\* *Sunt qui  
 Fortune  
 jam Casibus  
 omnia ponunt, &c.  
 Juven.*

† *Jambl.  
 de vit. Pythag. cap.  
 32.*

IX. *An Unbounded Love of Sensual Pleasures.* When the Nobler Dictates of Reason and Vertue are violently born down, and Men become wholly immers’d in the Life of Sense, or (according to the Scripture Character of the Last Times) *Lovers of Pleasure, more than Lovers of God* ; it’s no Wonder if they not only lose the true Gust of Contemplating on invisible Objects,  
and



and those more Substantial Enjoyments in Reversion, but come at last to question or suspect the Certainty of their Existence. Thus Multitudes, with an astonishing Bravery, as they account it, forcibly smother those Friendly Touches of the Natural Conscience, and innate Notions of a Deity, which, if adher'd to, would help to obviate their wandering Steps; till at last these abus'd Aids become either wholly extinct, or at best unactive, like a Spark cover'd with Ashes, which can give neither Light nor Heat. This is no better than Practical Atheism, how favourably soever many, who are call'd Christians, may be ready to think of it, and in some Respects Superior to Speculative, both in Guilt and Punishment, if Finally persisted in. For when Men have thus wholly abandon'd themselves to the Dictates of Sense, and are given up (as *S. Paul* expresses it) *to vile Affections*, having bid Defiance to Reason and Vertue, to the Fear and Love of God, to all Esteem of Religion and Substantial Goodness, they will not stick to Ridicule and oppose those amiable Habits in all Others; and are

are consequently in the High Way to that Last and most Fatal Cause of irrecoverable *Atheism*, viz.

X. *Judicial Hardness of Heart.*

The *Holy One* of *Israel* will not always bear with the Reproachful Indignities of Wretched Worms. If a long *Series* of his Goodness and Forbearance, of his Warnings, Sollicitations, Mercies and Judgments, will not prevail to soften them; if they will choose to wallow in all Filthiness and Impiety; will proceed to Blaspheme his Name, and trample on his Honour in the most Tender Points, by Affronting Religion, Aspersing its Righteous Ways, Vili-fying his Sacred Word, Institutions and Worship; He will at last give them up to their own Delusions, that they may *be Filthy still*, and settled in the Natural Obduracy or Impenitence of their own Hearts: Which is the heaviest Judgment, on this side Hell, that can possibly be inflicted on Reasonable Creatures. Nor can the Severity of Such Proceedings in any measure De-rogate from his general Goodness and Mercy: For since Men opprobriously resist

resist both the Light of Nature and Divine Revelation, what can be more just than for the Sovereign Dispenser to take away their Neglected Talents, and suffer them to sink beneath that Reason which they have so grossly abus'd? Thus the Divine Honour, breaking through the usual Methods of Long-suffering and Patience, has often eminently vindicated it self in the Public View of the World; and loudly refuted all Atheistical Principles and Practices, by the utter Confusion, Horror, Madness and Self-Execution of their most Daring Abettors. Which Execrable Fact and Horrid Impiety, condemn'd by all Sober *Heathens* with the greatest Detestation, has given an undeniable Proof *That the Serious Practice of Religion is the Highest Reason; an Obedient Fear of God, the Truest Wisdom; and an Irreligious Life, the Greatest Folly in the World.*

BUT, Supposing That these severe Remarks on the Dreadful Causes, Symptoms and Effects of *Atheism*, may be unsuited to the Present Times; since  
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very Few would willingly lye under the heavy Imputation ; and That those general Impressions of Natural Religion which, improv'd by Superior Helps, establish a Firm Belief of the Eternal Being, and serve as a Spring to quicken our Motions in all the necessary Parts of Divine Worship, are so clear and un sullied in the most of Christians, as to need none of these Brightning *Memento's* : Yet, for the greater Security, in a Matter of so high importance, Such a Test as this may be in some measure allowable, *viz.*

Is that Belief so truly Awful and Practical, as to influence the general Course of the Life and Actions ? Does it teach them Humility, Gratitude, Resignation and Dependance ; so as to Regulate their Love to, and Solitude for, all inferior Comforts with a becoming Moderation ; and commit their Souls to Him in a Course of Wel-doing, *as unto a Faithful Creator* ? Does it induce them, from a strong Propension of Mind, to Praise, Admire and Love Him, as the most Desirable Good ; to esteem his Favour *better than*



*than Life*, and carefully avoid whatsoever is Displeasing to Him ; to delight in the Practice of Vertue, and encourage it in Others, because 'tis an Eminent Part of his Likeness, and an indispensable Ornament of the Rational Soul ? Does it make them equally cautious of the most Secret, as of those Open Sins which incur the Censure of Men ? Does it inspire them with a Zealous Concern for his Name, Honour, Service and Interest in the World ? With a just Value for his Holy Word, and the admirable Method of Salvation therein Reveal'd ; notwithstanding all the Contradictions of profligate Men, and the bitter Reproaches of Infidels ? Does it make them, in a Word, truly Serious, Regular and Constant in all the Substantial Duties of Religion ; Faithful, Diligent and Conscientious in all their Temporal Concerns ; and meekly instrumental, by the most Exemplary Vertue and Sobriety, to correct the Vices of a Dissolute Age ?

*PRACTICAL ATHEISM*  
has always been the Grand Support of  
*Specula-*



*Speculative* ; and deservedly esteem'd no less Damning in its Tendency and Effects ; being altogether as unreasonable and provoking, as the Other is impious and absurd : But, in Respect of the unhappy Influence it has on Others, this seems to merit the severest Punishment, if any Difference shall be assign'd. As 'tis the Highest Ingratitude, so the Deepest Stain of Reasonable Nature, and admits of no Palliation or Excuse ; especially where all the Extraordinary Advantages of Divine Revelation have been not only enjoy'd in the constant Exercise of the Ministerial Function, but by Fœderal Engagements assented to. *S. Paul* speaks of Some who *profess'd that they knew God ; but in Works deny'd Him* : And what more dreadful Character is it possible for Men to lye under ; unless by Solemn Contract and Resignation they become Sworn Factors to the Devil ? What Arguments can Such use to perswade the incredulous World that there is any Thing amiable and attractive in Christianity, or in Moral Vertue and Goodness ; or to win them over to a Practical Belief of the Being  
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and Attributes of God, whilst they can satisfy themselves to live as if they thought there were None? Thus the *Ways of Zion mourn*: Religion is expos'd to Indignity and Contempt; and its Glorious *Author* continually *wounded in the House of his Titular Friends*: Which is far worse than all the Design'd Affronts which He receives from the most inveterate Enemies. Yet this Dreadful Contagion is apt to steal on Multitudes of Christians insensibly, in a pleasing Growth of Vicious Habits; whilst they can easily take up with a Few General Notions, Cold and Transient Thoughts, or a Lazy Indifference in Things of Eternal Concernment. Were the real Danger, both in Respect of Themselves and Others, but duely apprehended; Such as are Wel-wishers to the Common Good of Mankind, would not take so great a Liberty in Sporting with Profaneness, and boldly venturing on the Borders of Atheism; but by Timely Caution and Diligent Care happily crush those Pernicious Evils in their Beginning; lest, being more thoroughly confirm'd, the Task should be almost

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as Difficult as to remove a Mountain. The Mind that is inur'd to the Paths of Vertue, always carries with it the surest Balance against those Enormities by which Others are easily born down : And this plainly suggests the great Advantage of early Piety and good Education. As to a Careless Person ; if notwithstanding his Sottish Disposition, and unwarrantable Neglects; all should happen to succeed well at last, in the Main Chance (which is more than Reasonable to be expected) ; yet the want of that solid Satisfaction and true Composure which generally attends a Wel-order'd Conversation, would be sufficient to deter any considerate Christian from running so great a Risk : But especially since such a Deportment will have the most unhappy Influence on the Final Determination of a Future State.

IF Christianity, in the whole Scope of its Excellent Doctrines, leads Men to the Noblest Pitch of Moral Vertue, and Something beyond it ; how highly inexcusable must all those be, whose Degenerate Minds will subject both

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Reason and Divine Revelation to the Sordid Pleasures of Sense! Who prefer a few Pleasing Trifles at present, to an incorruptible Crown in Reverſion; or perhaps too often ſtagger both at the Belief thereof and their Capacity for ſuch an Enjoyment! Who, at the Beſt, content themſelves with an Orthodox Faith in Notion only; but make no Scruple to contradict it in the whole Courſe of their Life and Actions! Whatever the affected Bravery of ſuch Daring Advocates for Atheiſm, or Stupid Pretenders to Chriſtianity, may ſuggeſt for their preſent Encouragement, Nothing is more certain than That after a few more Days, Months, or perhaps Years, are rolled over, Death will Diſſolve their preſent Frame, and fix them in an unchangeable State of Bleſſedneſs or Woe: And then their Plenary Enjoyments of either Kind, will be according to the former Guſt which they have had in this Short and uncertain Tract of Time. If they have now no Practical Knowledg of nor Delight in the Paths of Vertue and Holineſs, they ſhall aſſuredly remain Strangers

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to the blessed Fruits and Glorious Rewards thereof for ever : Since Nothing can be more absurd than to take a full Carouze in the imaginary Sweets of this World (as not a Few, tho' scarce deserving to be rank'd among Brutes; esteem the Height of Immorality) and yet hope to share in the neglected Joys of the World to come. That ingenuous and well known Excuse in the Poet — *Video Meliora proboque; Deteriora sequor* — will neither extenuate nor relieve : But rather, on the contrary, the most insupportable Torments will then arise from a fresh and indelible Remembrance of Former mis-improv'd Opportunities. For the Soul, being wholly Disengag'd from its present Clogs of Flesh and Sensual Pleasures, will have the most clear and Reflexive View of it self and all the Actions which it has produc'd ; and need no Arguments (as too many now do) to prove the real intrinsic Worth of True Religion and Serious Piety ; whether there be any more in it than an empty Name, an advantageous Artifice; or, at Best, a Plausible Pretence to amuse the World:

No ; Invisible Things will then appear the greatest Realities ; their Importance answerable to the Duration and Degree ; and They alone be adjudg'd the Faithful Stewards, whose Time and Talents, whose steady Care and Best Endeavours, have been delightfully employ'd in Contemplating the Glory above, and securing to themselves the inestimable Treasures of an Endless Life. Therefore amidst the various Incumbrances and Hurry of Thoughts that accost Us in our Hazardous Passage through the uneven Paths of Time, this will be found the *One Thing Needful* ; which, like a Cluster from the Promis'd Land, may serve at Present to invigorate our Minds in their most Gloomy Intervals ; and excite to such a patient Perseverance in Well-doing as hath the sure Promise of a Blessed Immortality annex'd : Whereas, on the Contrary, to slip these Golden Minutes, allotted for our Probation, either in a Disbelief or Careless Contempt of Future Joys and Punishments, till the Soul by a Sur-

Surprizing Summons is hurried off from its Earthly Station, in order to give an Account at the Supreme Tribunal; must needs very much imbit-ter the Dark Passage into another World, and prove a certain, but ter-rible, Pledge of its Future Disappoint-ment.

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## ANACEPHALÆSIS.

**F**ROM what has been hitherto, with humble Deference and as much Brevity as possible, offer'd to the Serious Consideration of all Unprejudic'd Persons, on the First mention'd *Heads* ; these Plain *Deductions* do necessarily arise, *viz.*

**I. NOTWITHSTANDING** that Active, Powerful and Penetrating Principle of Divine *Reason*, Originally instamp'd on the Human Soul, which was both Sufficient to have preserv'd an Universal Rectitude in its Faculties, and remain'd an Effectual Guide in the Way of Duty and Happiness : This Shining Resemblance of the Omnipotent Creator, is now altogether Darken'd ; and, tho' the Chief Spring



of Spiritual Life and Operations, deeply tainted with a Poysonous Infection; So that the Lower Subservient Faculties, thus vitiated and Deprav'd, whilst, like the Ruins of some very Magnificent Building, they are yet Discernible, have altogether lost their Moral Tendency and Regular Exercise; being swallow'd up by those impetuous Disorders into which they were fallen. Hence the Understanding and Judgment are mortally wounded and miserably perverted; and that Divine Love, which at First inspir'd the Will and Affections, either extinguish'd or at least over-born by those impure Flames of the Sensitive Appetite. And thus the whole Mass of Mankind were equally concluded under an absolute Incapacity, without the Extraordinary Favour of a Special Divine Revelation, and those other Supernatural Aids annex'd thereto, to Discern, choose or persevere in the Way of Life and Blessedness; to Retrieve the Original Excellency of their Nature, and that Beatific Communion in Knowledg and Obedience to which they were Design'd.

II. I N this Deplorable State, of Universal Defection, Impotence and Guilt, which had altogether effac'd the Heavenly Image, the unsearchable Depth of Divine Omniscience, Wisdom and Grace was Gloriously manifested in Exhibiting, under the Form of Human Nature, an Almighty *Deliverer*, of infinite Vertue and Efficacy; to Expiate the Guilt, Reconcile, Sanctify, Renew, and Purchase, with an adequate Price, Man's Joyful Re-admission to the Eternal Bosom which He had forfeited; and on a much surer Foundation than that Self-sufficiency wherewith He had been formerly intrusted. Which Glorious Mystery of Redemption, eminently Display'd under the Types and Promises of the *Old Testament*, and in Due Time completely verified in the Person, Obedience and Sufferings of our Blessed Savior, is of the highest Importance for all Mankind to believe and Practically embrace; as the Onely Means wherein their Ultimate Felicity is involv'd. For, in what Degree soever (which is beyond the Human Province

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to Determine) a General Persuasion of Divine Goodness, accompanied with a Life of Integrity and Vertue, from Those that were most Exemplary in Natural Improvements, where the Happy *Medium* of Reconciliation has been altogether unknown, may be accepted by the Supreme *Donor*, whose Expectations (as that noted Parable of the Talents suggests) will be proportion'd to the Measure which he gives: *Such* as have been eminently Favour'd with that Singular Happiness of enjoying the *Sure Word of Prophecy*, and clearest Revelation of *Him* who is *the Way, the Truth and the Life*; as well in the Dignity and Suitableness of his Person, as the Divine Authority, Efficacy and Perfection of his Doctrine and Merits, confirm'd by the most infallible Proofs that either Reason or Sense could require; and yet, from a Perverseness of Mind, will resolutely choose to retract their Baptismal Dedication, trample on his Laws, undervalue his Benefits, or lessen his Prerogative; must inevitably incur both the Deepest Guilt and Severest Condemnation, at his Glorious Appearance,  
with

with the Terrors of Divine Majesty,  
to *Judge the World in Righteousness.*

III. THE Genuine Effects of that Blessed Dispensation on the Minds of Men, are so highly Ennobling, so truly Excellent and inimitable; that all other Vertuous Habits, whether Natural or acquir'd, which of themselves bear a Tincture of Vanity surpassing their intrinsic Worth, are thereby purg'd from their Native Dross, and in Subservience to the Superior Principle of Divine Operative Faith, help to make up that renew'd Frame, or amiable Temper, wherein the Life and Essence of Religion Eminently consists. And no less than such an Happy Complication of all Heavenly Vertues, is sufficient to answer the Great Design of the Gospel, in Exalting the Glory of the Divine Attributes, thro' the whole Work of Salvation, by *Jesus Christ*; as the compleat Propitiatory Sacrifice, the inexhaustible Fountain of Life, and the Eternal Root and Pattern of all Holy Obedience. An Universal Conformity to his Blessed Doctrin and Institutions, with a Delightful



lightful Emulation of his Humility, Patience, Forgiveness, Self-Denial, Beneficence, Charity, Resignation, and all other his imitable Perfections; are the Necessary Evidence of a sure Title to, or Interest in, those inestimable Privileges of the Evangelic Covenant. Hereby the true Dignity of Human Nature is most successfully retriev'd; Corrupt Reason subjected to the surer Conduct of its proper Guide, and the Lower Undisciplin'd Faculties reduc'd to an happy Order and Harmony in their Pursuit of all those appointed Means which infallibly lead to our ultimate Happiness.

IV. As every Greater Principle, in Things of the same Nature and Tendency, comprehends or necessarily includes the Lesser : So *Christianity*, the most Excellent Principle and Ennobling Habit of which Reasonable Nature is Susceptive, not only contains, but heightens, improves and purifies all the Subservient Springs of general Vertue and Goodness. That Original Law of Moral Righteousness, imprinted on the Human Soul, as a Guide  
to



to the Supreme Love and Service of God, and an Imitation of his Veracity, Faithfulness, Justice, Mercy and Beneficence towards Men ; our Blessed Savior, in the voluntary Assumption of Human Nature, came to Rectify, Brighten and Restore. Notwithstanding this had been very much obscur'd through Man's Deviation and Disobedience, and afterwards, by wonderful Condescension, made plain in the Two Tables of Written Precepts, 'usher'd in with the most Authentick Marks of Divine Authority ; yet there was need of such a *Messiah*, or Heavenly *Interpreter* (as *Elihu* expresses it) to Establish and confirm this unalterable Rule, Discover its Rectitude, free it from the miserable Perversion of Mens Erroneous Judgment, and enforce its Everlasting Obligation. All which He has compleatly answer'd, both in Example and Precept, to the Eternal Refutation of *Antinomian* Principles and Practices; which by an unwarrantable Latitude, have shamefully abus'd the Holy Doctrins of Evangelic Faith to a secret Indulgence of some particular Darling Vices, and

too

too often the grossest Immoral Actions, in open Defiance of all Natural Justice and Humanity.

V. A W R Ê T C H E D Complication of the Blackest Deformities incident to Rational Beings, *viz.* the most Horrible Impiety, the deepest Ingratitude, and the grossest Absurdity, are requisite to the Constitution and Support of that Monstrous Birth which we call *Atheism*: A Principle ( if it may be call'd any ) so inconsistent in it self, so irreconcilable to the common Light of Nature, to the many Wonders of Creation and Providence, and the general Sentiments of Mankind in all Ages, that without the most sordid Degeneracy and wilful Stupidity it could never have obtain'd the least Footing among Intelligent Creatures. Consider'd strictly as Negative, it implies no less than a Privation or total Extinction of Solid Reason and Goodness, or of the Universal Dictates of Natural Religion, with all their necessary Consequents : And, as it properly surpasses any Positive Denomination ;

nation ; so, 'in some Degree, the De-  
meanor of the very Apostate Spirits ;  
who, whilst they have cast off all Du-  
ty and Allegiance to their Rightful  
Sovereign, retain, with Horror, an  
Acknowledgment of his Eternal Be-  
ing and irresistible Power. In vain  
therefore does Proud Man, an helpless  
and Dependent Worm, far more Vile  
than those which He daily treads on,  
breath out his Blasphemous Affronts  
against Divine Omnipotence, and pre-  
sume to contend with his Glorious  
Creator and Merciful Preserver ; not  
only by out-braving his Power and  
Justice, but most desperately Deny-  
ing his Existence, and impiously De-  
riding both the unparallel'd Love and  
inestimable Merits of the Blessed Re-  
deemer, with the awful Mysteries of  
that Sacred Religion instituted by  
Him. For, tho' Divine Patience usu-  
ally consigns Such Daring Miscreants  
to that Dreadful Tribunal of the Su-  
preme Judg ; yet they are always  
within his Reach, and not only liable  
to be crush'd in pieces every Moment,  
but often utterly confounded in the ve-  
ry midst of their execrable Defiance,  
and

and given up, as Tremendous Monuments of Vengeance and Caution, to the insupportable Agonies of Despairing Horror, and the Destructive Violence of their own Hands. As to Others; who profess a Firm Belief of the Incomprehensible Deity, with an awful Regard to the Divine Authority and Positive Institutions of our Blessed Savior, and yet by their Dissolute Lives reflect a Shame on that Holy Religion, and thereby prove the Principal Support of Speculative Atheism: Their Danger and Guilt is no ways inferior, but in Respect of their greater Measure of Knowledg, and the unhappy Influence on Multitudes of Others, to harden them in a Contempt of Piety and Vertue, admits of a Dreadful Aggravation; and, whatever they may fondly imagine to the contrary, without the Serious Interposition of a Timely Retreat and adequate Repentance, manifested in all the proper Fruits thereof, will assuredly terminate in that Dismal Portion of *the Hypocrites and Unbelievers.*

THE



T H E  
C O N C L U S I O N .

**T**H E S E Brief Animadversions on the most weighty Matters relating to the general Interest of *Religion*, together with Some Few Coincident Thoughts of what most directly tends to a Common Temporal Happiness, and removing the Principal Obstacles thereunto ; would need no Degree of Apology, were we but duly affected with the great Activity of our Common Adversary, by all Sorts of Instruments and the most Refin'd Stratagems, not only to introduce an Universal Corruption of Manners ; but wholly to Subvert the Foundations of *Reveal'd* or Instituted *Religion* ; by exploding the Divine Origin, Necessity and Efficacy of the Holy Scriptures as an Establish'd



blish'd Rule both of Faith and Practice ; Diminishing or undervaluing the *Lord of Glory*, as well in the Dignity of his Person as the Merits of his Sacrifice ; and Bearing down the Sacred Function in that just Authority Delegated by Him, with the most Opprobrious Invectives : And if we had also a Just Sense of the inexpressible Mischiefs arising from our Unhappy Divisions and Animosities, respecting Matters of *Civil* Concernment. When a Foreign Enemy, or *Pretender* to Native Right assisted by Foreign Power, attempts to invade our Confines, None can reasonably plead to be exempted from that Common Duty of joining in the Opposition : And when the Grand Disturber of our Present and Eternal Repose, in Things of the Sublimest Nature, exerts Himself with an unusual Vigour to accomplish his pernicious Designs ; by widening our unhappy Breaches, heightening our Animosities, and rendring both the Essentials of Religion and all Ecclesiastical Authority contemptible, or at least ineffectual for the necessary Support of Order

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*The Conclusion.*

der and Discipline, and preserving the Purity of Faith and Manners; it is to be hop'd none will be so carelessly stupid as to think themselves unconcern'd in the general Danger, and not contribute their Pious Wishes, joyn'd with Exemplary Endeavours, to avert the Fatal Consequents.

As there never was a clearer Direction of Providence, or more real Occasion, for all Protestants, who under several Denominations, profess an Equal Aversion to the Church of *Rome*, and plead the Common Principles of Reformation, to lay aside their Former Unhappy Prejudice and Animosities, and heartily contribute their United Endeavours to those Great and Excellent Purposes, *i. e.* Supporting the General Interest of Christianity in its Fundamental Principles and Blessed Effects, against the Daring Attempts of worse than *Popish* Adversaries; who aim at no less than the utter Extirpation of the Common Christian Faith: So there never was a more Favourable or Advantageous Opportunity than under the Gentle Admi-

Administration of Her Present MAJESTY; who in Her own Great Example, Pious Concern, and Diffusive Goodness, has always manifested a Singular Desire to Unite all Her *Subjects* in One Common Bond of Interest and Affection, to retrieve the Beauty and Reputation of Substantial Piety, and be Instrumental for the Reforming of an extreamly Loose and Profligate Age. And if any can be so inflexible, either through a fond Indulgence of Vicious Courses, or unreasonable Piques, as to thwart, or not heartily promote, such Noble Designs, in their respective Stations and Capacities; they will do well to consider seriously what just Displeasure of Almighty God, what deserved Censures of the Better Sort of Mankind, (not only at present, but handed down to their unhappy Posterity) and what dismal Scenes of Repentance, they are boldly preparing for themselves.

'T WERE indeed greatly to bewish'd (as there is the Highest Reason imaginable) That where the Points of Difference from the National Establish-

*The Conclusion.*

ment are very small, in Comparison of all those Essential and more Weighty Things wherein they agree, a Tender Regard to the great Advantages of Peace, Unity and Order, might be thought of sufficient Weight to sollicit a speedy Return, and preserve the Harmony of a General Communion; notwithstanding such Diversity of Opinions about Circumstantial Points, wherein all Good and Sincere Christians never were nor will be agreed. But, tho' this must be left to the Judgment and Conscience of every individual Person, over which another can claim no just Right to preside; yet the Defect hereof, on the Account of immoveable Scruples and a Conscientious Integrity, can be no Reasonable Bar to the Preservation of a more general Unanimity and Concord, in the mutual Intercourse of all Good Offices, for restraining the impetuous Torrent of Prophaneneis and strengthening the Common Interests of Religion; as Fellow Members of the same Mystical Body, the True Universal Church, connected to the same Glorious *Head* in One Orthodox Faith and Baptism;



Baptism; and Professedly aiming at the same Religious Ends, tho' under different Modes of outward Appearance. By resuming such a Primitive Temper, the Principal Designs of the Subtil adversary in our unhappy Divisions would be easily Frustrated, the general Peace and Unity of the Church secur'd, the awful Reputation of Christianity retriev'd and advanc'd, and all its Positive Institutions preserv'd in their just Authority and Esteem.

WITHOUT such Universal Principles of Brotherly Kindness and Charity, of Meekness and Condescension, manifested by an hearty Concurrence in promoting the General Love of Vertue and Piety, not only in Notion but Practice, and free from the Modern Biass of Unfriendly Distinctions; we can have no just Reason to expect any considerable Progress in Reclaiming the Destructive Immoralities of the Times, nor a further Continuance of the Propitious Smiles of Heaven to crown with an happy Issue those Great and Noble Enterprises in the Public  
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Defence of Honour and Liberty wherein we have justly engag'd. Tho' hitherto the *British* Realm has not only been surrounded with Peace and Plenty, whilst the Distant World is almost sunk under the Pressure of Hostile Violence, and those Dismal Confusions that necessarily attend it; but often happily surpris'd with a full Tide of the most astonishing Success, flowing in upon Us beyond all reasonable Expectation or Hopes: Tho' our SOVEREIGN has eminently appear'd, beyond the Reach of Detracting Malice, to have been reserv'd by the peculiar Care of Providence as the Glorious Instrument both to consummate the Happiness of Her Kingdoms, and settle the Jarring Nations, like *Augustus Caesar*, in perfect Tranquility: Tho' Her Invincible Resolutions, Unparallel'd Conduct, and Exemplary Piety, have sufficiently Discover'd Her to have no further Relish of Life or Greatness than as She is capable of improving the more immediate Felicity of Her People, and conferring Durable Benefits on the World: Yet 'tis possible for Those who enjoy so  
Great

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Great a Public Blessing, thro' Ingratitude and want of Humble Acknowledgments to the Supreme *Author*, Indulgence of Vicious Courses, unreasonable Animosities, and other Sinful Provocations, to stop ( like wretched *Achan* in *Israel* of old ) the Merciful Current of Divine Favours: Whereas a wise Improvement of them, to the Furtherance of Religion and Vertue, of Gratitude, Unanimity and Love, is the most probable, yea certain Means to engage both their continued Descent and abundant Increase. 'Twas the Assertion of a very Great *Author*, That *a Fruitful Land is turn'd into Barrenness* from the Dissolute Lives of its Inhabitants: And if so, Men may divert their Inquiries into more Useful Speculations than either to murmur at the Unerring Conduct of Divine Providence, or turn the sole Edge of their Reflections on any Instruments, when the propos'd Success of the Best concerted Measures does not fully answer their confident Expectations. The most Signal Blessings of Heaven loudly call for Proportionable Returns; and especially from a People Professing Christia-

Christianity in its Purest Reformation: Wherein if we are not found wanting, there is no Reason to Doubt but That the Sovereign Director of all Causes and Events, to whom Nothing is more Pleasant than for Brethren [in a Natural, Political, and Mystical Relation] to Dwell together in Unity, will yet Delight to do Us Good; and cause the Choicest of his Favours, like those Ancient Dews of Hermon, to descend both on our Church and State which have been eminently hitherto the Object of his Providential Care: On the Former, by a more Unanimous Pursuit of the General Scope and Excellent Purposes of Religion: And on the Latter, by such an intire Harmony of Interests and Affections, as will render Us a most Flourishing Kingdom throughout the Longest Records of Time, and an effectual Curb to the Swelling Pride of SUCH as shall presume to invade the Establish'd Rights of Mankind.

F I N I S


 A rectangular library stamp with a double-line border. Inside, the text "MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM" is arranged in three lines, with "MVSEVM" on the top line, "BRITAN" on the middle line, and "NICVM" on the bottom line.
 

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BRITAN  
NICVM